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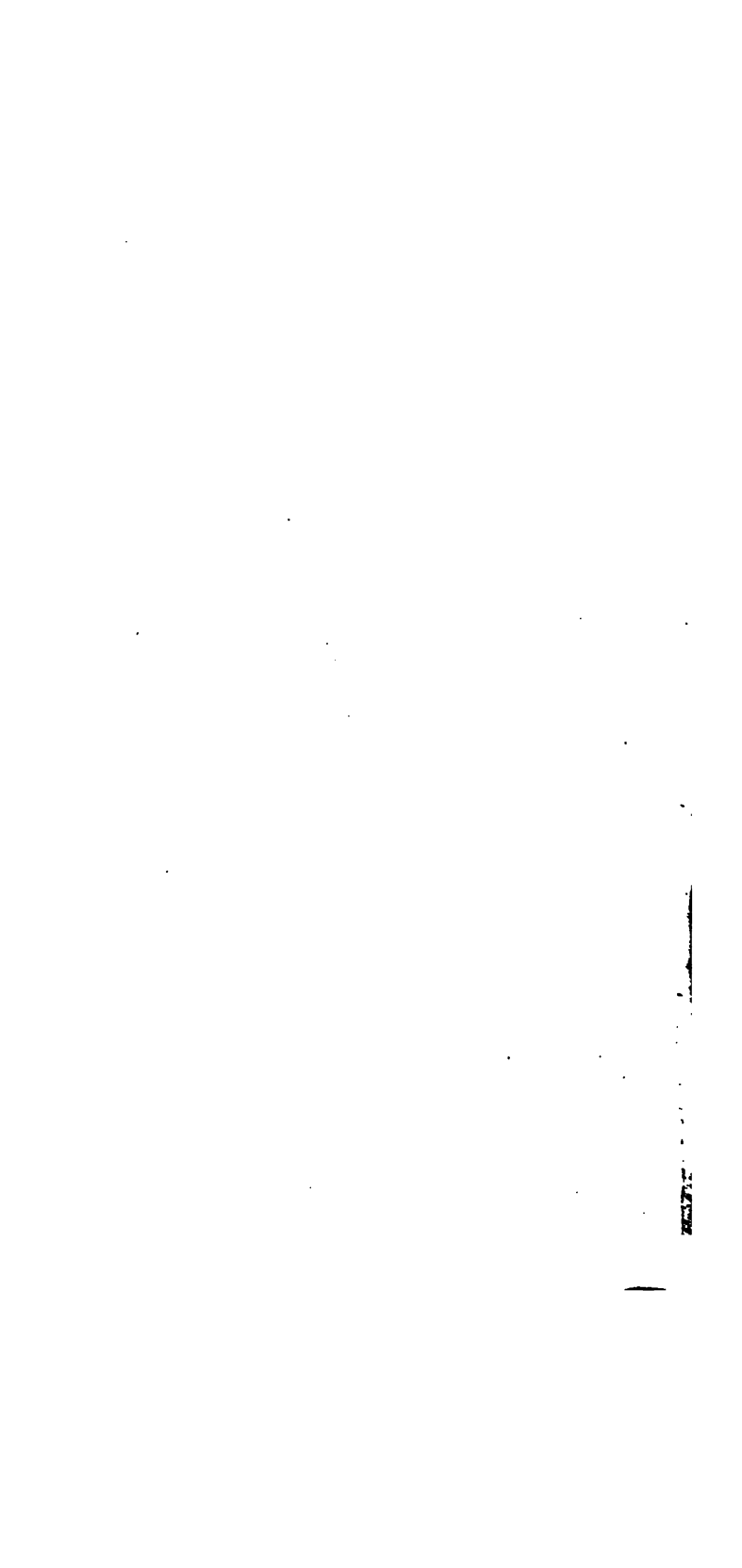
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A

SOLDIER'S OFFSPRING.

A TALE.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.



SOLDIER'S OFFSPRING;

OR,

THE SISTERS.

A Tale.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

EMMA DE LISLE.

And while each turn of passion I pursue,
Ask thy own heart if what I tell be true.

LYTTLETON.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
PRINTED AT THE
SPINNING-PRESS,
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.
(Successors to Lane, Newman, and Co.)
LEADENHALL-STREET.
1810.



249. v. 298.



DEDICATORY LINES.

Who has so just a claim to the production of my imagination, as she whose tender care, and most anxious solicitude, was to behold it adorned and cultivated? Therefore, to thee, MY MOTHER, I dedicate the following pages.

THE HISTORY OF THE

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TO THE READER.

READER, if thou art one of those who only read to be astonished, and find pleasure in beholding human nature depicted in the most degrading colours, peruse not the following pages: If thou feelest no satisfaction in pursuing the delineations of *natural* sensations, and art insensible to the pleasures of sympathy, lay down this volume, for it is a mere *simple* tale, and, to you, would appear tasteless and uninteresting.

Does not this apostrophy to the Reader demand an apology? "Surely it does!"

I have, in the first place, accused him (or, at least, admitted a doubt, which is almost synonymous) of finding pleasure in beholding his nature degraded; secondly, of feeling no satisfaction in seeing it in its natural colours; and, lastly, conceived him to be incapable of sympathy: add to all this, I have contrived very ingeniously to give him to understand, that the work before him is of a superior description, and that he will there behold human nature delineated with extraordinary correctness and perspicacity—an *assumption* he will probably contradict, before he has performed half his journey to *font*.

Allowing that he is not of an irritable disposition, nor easily offended, yet undoubtedly he may reasonably accuse me of conceit and self-sufficiency: to which, as well as any desire to impeach the reader's

der's taste or judgment, I beg leave to plead, "Not Guilty;" and shall accordingly enter upon my defence, when I trust I shall be able to prove, that, if not entirely blameless, nevertheless, the very ostensible and important motive which instigated me, will most certainly acquit me in the minds of the liberal and impartial judges. I will not, Reader, bespeak your patience, as I trust the conciseness with which I shall express myself, will render my exertion of that most detestable qualification unnecessary. I am perfectly aware that no one will calmly submit to the imputations I have artfully endeavoured to cast upon them; and the only possible means of proving the injustice of my surmises, is by immediately proceeding to peruse this work, which will at once prove

that my opinion was erroneous. By adopting this measure, my book will get read, which, but for this, might probably have been thrown aside at the end of the first chapter. Surely every judicious reader will admit, that the end to be derived amply excuses the means adopted to promote it, and will certainly acquit me of impertinence or self-conceit, though, perhaps, they will not allow me to be equally devoid of *art*.

I will now, considering my pardon sealed, immediately enter upon the subject of these memoirs.

SOLDIER'S OFFSPRING.

CHAP. I.

De'gi coomini son vari gli appetiti

A chi piace la chiesa, a chi la spada,

A chi la patria, a chi strani liti

Chi vuol andare, a torno vada.

ARISTO.

Various are men's pursuits; those seek renown

In fields of death; those chuse the sacred gown:

Some quit their native for a foreign shore—

Let those, that wish, unnumber'd realms explore.

ON a delightful spot, adjacent to the New Forest, and commanding an extensive sea and land prospect, stood the comfortable mansion of Colonel Fairfield. A spa-

cious lawn extended itself before the house, skirted on one side by a hanging wood, and on the other, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, by the high road, which was totally obscured by a thick plantation of evergreens. The lawn was terminated by a winding river, partially concealed by the trees which ornamented its margin: in various places, rustic bridges were thrown across, forming a communication with the opposite bank.

The estate adjoining this spot was not so extensive as might be concluded, from the appearance of the house and pleasure-grounds. It had, for many ages, been the hereditary property of the Fairfields, an ancient and respectable family; and, in course of succession, had devolved to Colonel Fairfield at his father's death, which took place soon after his son, who was an only child, had attained his twenty-first year. His mother had died during his infancy; therefore Frederic Fairfield received his estate, unincumbered with either jointure

ture or mortgages, as his father had been a very domestic character, and had made the interest of his son the chief study of his life.

Frederic felt much at the loss of his father, and being of an active disposition, he could not endure the idea of quietly sitting down, to vegetate upon the production of his estate; he therefore determined on entering the army, as the profession best suited to his inclinations, and also as the probable means of making him acquainted with the manners and customs of foreign countries—a gratification he could not have indulged himself in entirely at his own expence, as his income did not exceed five hundred pounds a year—a sum very inadequate to supplying the extravagancies of a young man like Frederic, who was liberal-minded to excess, and fond of supporting appearances greater, perhaps, than he had a right to. But, strange to say, he was sensible of his own weakness, and therefore resolved to avoid

all situations which might be likely to involve him in unnecessary expences. He had also another motive for this conduct; it was his intention, when he had attained the age of five-and-twenty, to seek out an object worthy of his heart; and he amused himself with the idea, that whatever economy he practised, was for the benefit of his future progeny.

Accordingly, he put his plan into execution; leaving his estate in the hands of a trusty agent, he procured a commission in a regiment under orders for foreign service, and immediately joined it. He continued abroad many years, and repeatedly distinguished himself by his superior abilities and bravery, which he had various opportunities of displaying.

At the age of thirty, he obtained the rank of major; and a short time after, met with an estimable and accomplished female, such a one as, till then, he had in vain sought for. Her father was governor of a small island in the West Indies, where

Fairfield's

Fairfield's regiment was then stationed. No objection was made to his proposals; the lady was portionless; but this was no impediment; they were united.

Little worthy of note occurred during the lapse of five years; the regiment still continuing in the West Indies, occasionally removing from one island to another. At the end of that time, Mrs. Fairfield presented her husband with a little girl, and the following year with another. These events so rapidly succeeding, greatly affected the health of the mother, who was never after perfectly well; and during the five following years, she was continually subject to severe indisposition.

Fairfield, then Colonel, was obliged, at that period, to accompany his regiment to North America. His wife would not hear of a separation from him; she, therefore, with her two little girls, went with him. The sudden change, from the most debilitating climate to the sharp asperity of a Canadian atmosphere, was more than the

shattered

shattered constitution of Mrs. Fairfield could support, and, but a period to her existence, a few weeks after the winter had set in, and four months from her first arrival in Canada.

The deep regret which Colonel Fairfield experienced on this sad occasion, was in some degree ameliorated, when he reflected upon the miseries his wife had endured for the last five years; and those sufferings which, at the time he witnessed them, gave him the most acute anguish, he now considered as acts of Providence, tending to reconcile him to the loss of one, who, had she been such as when he first beheld her, it would have required the strongest efforts of philosophy, and extended length of years, to soften the severity of his lot.

I will not particularize the circumstances immediately succeeding Mrs. Fairfield's demise, nor the sensations of her family at the last sight of her loved remains; suffice it to say, she was interred with

with every possible demonstration of respect and affection.

Colonel Fairfield now beheld himself, the sole protector of two helpless girls, the eldest not quite six years old, the other just five. It required no great deliberation at once to determine him on quitting the army, as the only means of enabling him to have his children constantly under his eye. It was his intention to intrust the superintendence of their education to some worthy female, competent to undertaking so great a charge; which he trusted he should be able to procure, on his arrival in England, whither he purposed to proceed, as soon as he had completed his military arrangements.

It was true, his country was, at present, involved in a war, and the services of so valuable an officer could not fail of being missed; but there were many equally gallant men, to supply his place in the army.

"But who," cried he, as he regarded his little girls, "who shall supply my place to thee,

thee; my sweet ones? It is I, and I only, who am answerable for your future happiness, your future good conduct—it is my place to watch over your education—to see that it is conducted in a manner calculated to strengthen and enlarge your understandings, and fit ye for the duties of society. Yes! I will guard your tender minds from being warped and debilitated by a romantic representation of ideal sensations and visionary expectations. Ye shall be the pupils of Reason, and early shall ye be taught to obey her dictates.”

Such were the reflections of Colonel Fairfield, and surely every worthy parent will confess them just. In pursuance of the plan he had chalked out, the Colonel obtained leave of absence; and taking with him a female servant who had lived with Mrs. Fairfield before her marriage; and his own *valet-de-chambre*, he, with his two little girls, embarked for England. A speedy and prosperous voyage brought them in safety to Spithead; when disembarking without:

without delay, the Colonel and his family immediately set out for his estate, which was but a few hours drive from Portsmouth.

Colonel Fairfield had written home from America, as soon as he had decided on the conduct he meant to pursue; therefore his arrival was not unexpected. The house had never been occupied but by two old servants, since the death of Mr. Fairfield; his son not chusing to let a stranger inhabit it, fearing some alterations might be made which he should not approve.

The most particular friend Colonel Fairfield had, was Sir Francis Colebrook; they had been children together, and educated under the same masters, both at Eton and at Oxford; and a constant correspondence had been kept up between them; their estates joined each other; and it was to this friend the Colonel had written, to inform him of his intention of returning home.

It was about six o'clock in the evening,
when

when the carriage, containing Colonel Fairfield and his little girls, followed by that the servants occupied, entered the avenue leading to the family mansion. On the steps which ascended to the grand entrance, the Colonel beheld a gentleman standing in an attitude of impatient expectation, who, on a nearer view, he recognized for his much-esteemed friend, Sir Francis Colebrook, who repeatedly kissing his hand, demonstrated his eagerness to welcome him.

If any unpleasant sensations had intruded on the mind of Colonel Fairfield, they were all dissipated at this sight. Who has not, at some period of their lives, experienced the heart-warming emotion of being welcomed by a beloved and loving friend? There are very few delights, in my opinion, which surpass this. The smile-illuminated countenance of a sincere friend, ever acts as a specific against melancholy and regret. Never was the justice of this axiom more completely exemplified—

never,

never was the sensation above described experienced in a more animated degree, than when Sir Francis Colebrook, extending his hand to the Colonel, exclaimed—
 “My dear friend, how glad I am to see you!”

Repeated shaking of hands, and mutual expressions of joy, for a few moments, wholly engrossed them, when Sir Francis, casting his eyes around, said—“But your dear little ones—I have not yet had time to think of them!”

Colonel Fairfield now, for the first time, perceived the old people who had served his father, anxiously waiting to be taken notice of, each of them holding a hand of his little girls.

“My good creatures!” he exclaimed, “I beg pardon for not noticing you before; but my joy at seeing my old friend has quite bewildered me.”

The faithful servants overwhelmed him with their volubility, in expressing their happiness at his return, and with encomi-

ums.

ums on the children's beauty. The Colonel interrupted them, by turning to Sir Francis.

"Colebrook," he cried, "these are my little ones."

Sir Francis kissed them affectionately. "Pretty creatures!" he said, "I have some little people at home, who are anxiously expecting you; and they have got fine swings, rocking-horses, skipping-ropes, and tambourines, all waiting only for you to come and play with.—Upon my word," continued Sir Francis, turning to the Colonel, "I believe Frank and Elizabeth have neither thought or dreamt of any thing but your arrival, since they heard you were coming. I shall only allow you to remain here long enough to issue what orders are necessary, when I shall insist upon your accompanying me to the Hall, and remaining there, until every thing here is more comfortably arranged."

"You are very kind," replied the Colonel; "and I shall with pleasure avail myself

myself of your offer. I will candidly own, it was my intention to quarter my brats upon you, for a short time, as I shall be obliged to go to town, in order to resign all farther claims to the character of a hero; and all chance of ever distinguishing myself sufficiently to deserve that appellation." The Colonel concluded this sentence with a sigh.

"Were you to serve for ever," rejoined his friend, "you could not more deserve that title than you do already. You have done every thing a gallant soldier could do—and, in my opinion, the greatest act of heroism you ever performed, was in the manner in which you concluded your campaign, when you unhesitatingly sacrificed your long-cherished wishes for fame, all your darling propensities, and, in the vigour of your life, determined on retiring from the world, to perform what you thought your duty. Surely the conquest over our inclinations is the greatest it is possible to achieve!"

The

The Baronet ceased; but his friend remained silent. After a pause, Sir Francis continued—"But I believe the thirst for glory is somewhat like the thirst for wine; for when it has been gratified, as in your case, it so completely intoxicates, that it makes a man blind to the reality, and he thinks he can never have enough."

"I should be a happy man, did I deserve all you have been saying. And now, as I am very impatient to be presented to Lady Colebrook, I will go and make the necessary arrangements; and send the children and their attendant forward in the carriage, which I have not yet dismissed."

The Colonel soon returned, and telling his friend he was ready to accompany him, they proceeded arm in arm towards the Hall, which was little more than a mile distant from Fairfield Lodge. As they advanced on their way, they discoursed of former times, and the Colonel exclaimed—"It is now twelve years since I quitted England the last time; but if every one I meet

meet with is as little changed as you are, Colebrook, I shall begin to fancy it can not be more than twelve weeks."

"Oh," replied Sir Francis, laughing, "you speak too partially! I am quite a steady old fellow now—and it is time I should be, after having been married six years, and being father of four children."

"Four!" re-echoed his friend.

"Yes, four: Lady Colebrook is just recovered from her *accouchement*."

"And how old is the eldest?"

"Frank is just nine years old; Elizabeth, who is next to him, seven. We lost one, who was a few weeks old; and the youngest, who has been in existence little more than a month, I have called *Frederic*, after the friend I most esteem."

Colonel Fairfield made a suitable reply to this kind compliment, as they ascended the steps which led to the magnificent mansion of Sir Francis Colebrook, which nature and art combined to render enchanting.

The

The Colonel was presented to Lady Colebrook in the most gratifying manner, and welcomed by her, as an old and much-esteemed friend. The children had been arrived some time, and she was affectionately fondling them, when the gentlemen entered. The two little Colebrooks were vieing with each other, in endeavours to demonstrate their satisfaction; and the mutual delight of the juvenile party soon made it expedient that they should adjourn to the nursery; for as they got better acquainted, their joy became so tumultuous, that nothing else could be attended to. Lady Colebrook was not one of those mothers, who wish to see the attention of their guest entirely engrossed by their children; but whenever the little people became so noisy, as to prevent conversation from proceeding while they were present, she sent them out of the room.

The Colonel spent a most delightful evening, in the society of his congenial friends. The next morning he paid a visit

visit to his *hainne d'affairs*, Mr. Baily, who had the superintendence of his estate, and resided in one of the farms upon it. He found every thing in the highest order, and the accounts which Mr. Baily presented to his inspection, *all* perfectly correct.

During his residence abroad, Colonel Fairfield had at no time expended his annual income; and since his marriage, had lived entirely on his pay. By this considerate economy, he had been able to amass a sufficient sum to provide comfortably for his daughters. Mr. Baily had, for the last ten years, deposited in the Bank, five hundred pounds annually; and prior to that, many hundreds, at different periods; the interest of the whole of this sum he had also bought in to great advantage; and Colonel Fairfield had the satisfaction of finding, after a minute investigation, that he was possessed of a sufficiency, to enable him, to give each of his daughters four thousand pounds, and still
now have

respectable boarding-house at Knightsbridge, and was most anxiously looking out for a suitable situation, as the expences of her present mode of living far exceeded her limited income.

The Colonel made the necessary inquiries, respecting her connections, and the causes which had reduced her to her present state: to which he received the following full and satisfactory answer.

“Miss Elliot's father had been one of the wealthiest merchants in the metropolis. At an advanced age, he married, and his wife expired in giving birth to Lydia, his only child. From the moment of her birth, the fond father resolved to spare no expence in perfecting her education; he wished to see her the most learned and accomplished of her sex: she was the pride, the darling of his heart, and he delighted in the idea, that he should see her surpass all her acquaintance. As she advanced in years, she had masters for almost every thing which could be taught,
and

and being of a persevering and studious disposition, her greatest pleasure was in perfecting herself in every thing she undertook.

“At the age of twenty, her father beheld her such as his most ardent wishes would have made her. She accompanied him, at different times, to France, Spain, and Italy, where his mercantile concerns made it necessary he should go. He also undertook a voyage up the Mediterranean, (which her father was desirous she should perform); and as the ship they sailed in was his own property, and it was in time of peace, he made a point of putting in to all the ports, where there was any thing worthy of observation.

“Shortly after their return from this voyage, Mr. Elliot was persuaded to risk a large sum on speculation, the *whole* of which he lost. To make amends for this, he embarked almost all his property in a business, which, at the commencement,

every one thought would be the *certain* means of amassing an immense fortune. From unexpected and fortuitous events, this also *entirely* failed, and he became bankrupt; honourably resigning the whole of his remaining property to his creditors.

"This was poor Elliot's death-blow! he expired a few weeks after, leaving his daughter with only thirty pounds a-year, a legacy which had been left her by a relation. But Lydia was not friendless; her amiable disposition and cultivated understanding had procured her many; myself among them," continued Mrs. Lawrence. "I invited her to my house, an offer which she gratefully accepted. On her arrival, she acquainted me with her wishes to obtain a situation which might render her independant. At first, I endeavoured to combat her resolution, assuring her, her society would always be anxiously courted by her numerous friends;
but

But she soon silenced me, by the unanswerable arguments she adduced in support of her determination.

"She remained with me four months; during which, she received various applications, but not one which I approved of. At the end of that period, she resolved on taking up her abode at the boarding-house, (the mistress of which was a friend of her father's), and there to remain till she could procure what she desired. No persuasion could induce her to alter her determination, as she said she was sure I would not let her accept any offer she might receive, while she continued under my protection, from what, she termed, my too great anxiety for her welfare. It is only a month since she quitted me. I should feel particularly happy, if my young friend should have a chance of obtaining an asylum under your roof, Sir."

"Not a *chance*, but a *certainty*, my dear Madam," rejoined Colonel Fairfield; "that is, if she chuses it. After what you have

told me, I cannot hesitate for a moment, to solicit this young lady to take charge of, what I consider, my dearest treasure. I am all impatience to complete this arrangement."

Mrs. Lawrence presented the Colonel with Miss Elliot's direction, when, having politely taken leave, he threw himself into a hackney-coach, and proceeded to Knightsbridge. He found Miss Elliot at home. Her appearance was pleasing, for although her face was what, at first sight, might be denominated *plain*, she had an agreeable expression in her countenance when she spoke, which insensibly prepossessed one in her favour. She was above the middle height, and her manners and address exactly what a gentlewoman's ought to be.

Colonel Fairfield immediately made known the purport of his visit. In the most delicate terms, he informed her, that, from the very exalted character he had received of her, with which her appearance perfectly coincided, there was no
one

one to whom he could, with equal confidence, commit the management of his children—a task, which if he could but induce her to undertake, he should be for ever indebted to her.

Miss Elliot was charmed by the feeling method the Colonel had adopted, to offer her a situation, which he well knew she was most anxious to procure; and she promised to call on Mrs. Lawrence the next day, from whom, the Colonel informed her, she would receive every information relative to himself and family.

The Colonel took his leave, and the next day but one he received a note from Miss Elliot, informing him she should feel the utmost satisfaction in accepting the situation he had offered her.

All the business which had brought Colonel Fairfield to town being concluded, he quitted the metropolis a few days after, accompanied by Miss Elliot, in a neat travelling coach, (which he had procured

to take into the country); and arrived late that evening at Colebrook Hall.

In a short time, Colonel Fairfield and his family were comfortably settled at Fairfield Lodge. Miss Elliot was all she could be wished, and not more eligible as an instructress than entertaining as a companion.

I shall pass over the intervening years of childhood, until the period when this history commences; at which time, Lavinia (named after her paternal grandmother) had attained her eighteenth year; and Frances (named after her mother) had just past her seventeenth.

CHAP. II.

Ah! who can tell the triumphs of the mind;
By truth illumina'd, and by taste refin'd?

KEATS.

COLONEL Fairfield beheld in Lavinia, all that he had, in his most enthusiastic moments, desired she should be. Her character was precisely such as he expected would have been produced by the manner in which she had been educated. Her *naturally* strong understanding would have broke irresistibly through the darkest clouds of ignorance; but, when enlightened by cultivation, enlarged by liberal instruction, and tempered by discernment,

it assumed a force and brilliancy seldom, very seldom, equalled.

It is unnecessary to paint her temper and disposition, after having described her mind: *if* she had any disagreeable propensities, they never discovered themselves; for who can have a strong understanding that possesses not self-command? and who, that *has* self-command, would ever gratify their disagreeable propensities?

Lavinia might be denominated very tall; she was slight, but not thin. I will not say that her countenance had either a pensive or a lively cast, as that entirely depended on the state of her mind; but, in *either* mood, it was interesting. I will not say what colour her eyes were; it matters little whether they be black, blue, or hazel — *their* beauty ever depends upon the expression which animates them. We may therefore conclude, that Lavinia's were very beautiful; for the soul that beamed in her eyes was beautiful in all its forms.

Fanny

Fanny had as good a heart as can be imagined, and a *tolerable* share of common sense; but she did not always act as if possessed of the *latter*. She idolized her sister, and looked upon her as a paragon of perfection; she wished to be like her, but had neither power or capacity to imitate her in *every thing*. In the great and sterling qualities of the heart, they were equals; and, in person, they strongly resembled each other.

Colonel Fairfield had, with justice, imagined, that a constant residence in the same spot would tend to contract the ideas; and, for this reason, made an excursion every summer, not to a watering-place of fashionable resort, but to some of the picturesque beauties of his native isle. He had, the preceeding season, extended his tour to Edinburgh, and from thence to the Highlands. By this judicious plan, there were very few of the curiosities and beauties of Great Britain, which had not been

been visited by himself and daughters, accompanied by Miss Elliot.

They had spent three months in the metropolis; not to join in the gay round of dissipation, but that the sisters might receive the last finish to their education, by the attendance of masters eminent in the different branches they professed. They visited all the public amusements and wonders of the great city, as the Colonel thought it absolutely necessary, that an elegant female should be sufficiently acquainted with these every-day subjects, to enable them to join in the common topics of conversation, such as the theatres, opera, exhibition, &c.; and, indeed, on a first acquaintance with a person, it is so general to start these subjects, that to be wholly ignorant of them, must always give an appearance of awkward rusticity.

The winter subsequent to their return from London, Lavinia and Fanny were introduced by their father and Lady Colebrook,

brook, at the balls held at a neighbouring town, to which all the adjacent families resorted. They were, as will be concluded, extremely admired; and both received advantageous offers of marriage; but as they were only answered by polite denials, it is unnecessary to say more of the persons who made them. The hearts of the sisters were both perfectly at liberty, at the conclusion of the season.

The amiable disposition and refined accomplishments of Miss Elliot, could not be witnessed without being duly appreciated; and her hand had long been ardently solicited by Mr. Williams (the rector of the adjacent parish), a most particular friend of Colonel Fairfield's, and one whose estimable character eminently qualified him to perform the holy function he professed. He practised what he preached, and the bright example he presented to the observation of his surrounding flock, entitled him to dictate to them the performance of their duty—a

right which not all the gifts which the church has the power of bestowing, *can* give a man, while his own conduct openly contradicts the doctrine he professes.

Miss Elliot was not insensible to his worth, and had long promised, that when the education of her pupils was completed, she would no longer delay complying with Mr. Williams's desire. She accordingly relinquished the situation she had filled with so much credit, and gave her hand with confidence, while her heart assured her she was building her happiness on a basis, whose foundation was the strongest *human felicity can have, virtue and religion!*

CHAP. III.

No form so graceful can your eyes behold!

When Nature made him, she destroy'd the mould.

ORLANDO FURLOSO.

COLONEL Fairfield sincerely participated in the happiness of his friends; and in order to demonstrate his satisfaction, and gratify his daughters, he resolved on giving a ball and supper. Sir Francis Colebrook's family were the first acquainted with the projected entertainment, and Miss Colebrook assisted the sisters in making decorations and fantastic ornaments, for the ball-room, supper, &c.

Mr. Colebrook (the eldest son of Sir Francis)

Francis) was just returned from the University; he was the juvenile portrait of his father, both in mind and person, in whom a handsome and elegant exterior were a just representation of his more estimable qualities. The animated disposition and ingenuous temper of young Colebrook, rendered him a delightful addition to all societies. He was particularly active in assisting the young ladies in their ingenious work; but they positively asserted that he did a great deal of mischief; and Fanny threatened to expel him entirely, if he did not sit down quietly with his hands before him. He accused them of ingratitude, in slighting his offered services; but the majority being against him, he was obliged to comply, on pain of excommunication.

Colonel Fairfield had received letters from some particular friends, recommending to his notice the field officers of a marching regiment, that had lately arrived in his neighbourhood. This happened particularly

ticularly *apropos*; and as officers are generally allowed to be a great ornament to a ball-room, Colonel Fairfield sent an invitation to the corps. It is almost needless to add, it was eagerly accepted.

I do not mean to enlarge upon the appearance of the apartments, and approach to Fairfield Lodge, on the festive night, or swell this volume with an unnecessary display of festooned flowers, artificial cascades, volcanos, transparencies, emblematic devices, &c. &c. &c.; for I am aware, that the utmost powers of description have been exhausted, in depicting similar scenes. I shall therefore content myself with saying, *que tout etoit comme sa doit etre*; and that the guests universally expressed their astonishment at the ingenuity of the performances. But I do not mean to adduce the *former*, as a proof of the *latter*, for common politeness would have *compelled* them to be all astonishment, even if they had seen the same things a thousand times before.

By

By nine o'clock, all the families invited were assembled at Fairfield Lodge. Lavinia, Fanny, and young Colebrook, were seated on a sofa, anxiously expecting the music to strike up.

"Oh," cried Fanny, "I wish the officers would come! we cannot begin dancing without them—they always make it so late."

Scarcely had she concluded, when the door flew open, and "Colonel Howard, and the Officers of the ——— Regiment" were announced. An elderly gentleman advanced up the room, followed by upwards of twenty more, whose *exterior*, at least, bore a most brilliant appearance; the rich gold lace and epaulets rendering conspicuous many, who, but for this, might probably have passed for ever unobserved.

Fanny pushed her sister with her elbow, observing, at the same time, that there were some decent-looking men among them—"Look," she cried, "at that one in
the

the light-infantry dress !. He is apparently a very dashing fellow, is he not ?”

Lavinia hesitatingly answered—“ Y-e-s.”

“ Yes !” re-echoed her sister, “ why, you are not looking at the one I mean !”

“ Who ? where ? which did you mean ?” interrogated Lavinia, suddenly recalling her attention.

Fanny regarded her with surprise, as she exclaimed—“ Why, Lavinia ! what are you thinking of ? I fancy some one else has attracted your notice : come, tell me which it is ?”

“ You are right,” returned Lavinia ; “ I was observing that gentleman next to the Colonel : how elegantly he presents himself ! how completely the man of *ton* his appearance bespeaks him !”

“ I perfectly agree with you,” said Fanny : “ his figure is certainly most striking, and his face, at this distance, excessively handsome.”

In a few minutes, their father approached them, followed by Colonel Howard, and

and the gentleman whose exterior had prepossessed them so much in his favour. After presenting the former to the sisters, Colonel Fairfield, turning to the latter, said—"Major Berresford, my daughters, I had once the pleasure of being acquainted with your father, and I feel grateful to fortune, for giving me an opportunity of cultivating a friendship with his son."

"My dear Colonel," cried Major Berresford, with the most animated gestures, "I have an intuitive affection for all brother soldiers; and I never felt so proud of my profession as I do at this moment, as it enables me to claim a species of affinity to one, whose valour has immortalized his name for ever."

Colonel Fairfield's only reply to this spirited compliment was a smile, and shake of the head, as he quitted them to attend to the rest of his guests. Major Berresford entered into conversation with Fanny and Colebrook; Colonel Howard having planted himself next Lavinia, to whom he

was

was saying *civil things, a la façon de la vieille court!* He requested her hand for the first set, which she accepted; and the dancers being now summoned to their places, she immediately stood up.

Major Berresford solicited Fanny to honour him, but she was engaged to Colebrook. At this moment, Colonel Fairfield advanced, and begged leave to introduce the Major to Lady Colebrook, (who had not given up dancing on particular occasions), and he wished to recommend his young friend to the notice of all those he most esteemed.

Mrs. Williams opened the ball with Colonel Fairfield; and they were followed by twenty couples, whose animated appearance completely accorded with the hilarity of the scene. There were many good, and some elegant dancers among the company, each of whom received their due meed of praise from the spectators; but they were soon forgot, when the striking figure of Major Berresford, irresistibly commanding

commanding admiration, was beheld moving through the mazes of the dance.

It is generally observed, that "tall people do not dance so well as those of a middle size;" but the Major contradicted this axiom, for, although he was full six feet high, had the representation of *perfect elegance* been personated, it could not have been more accurately designed. The beauty of his dancing did not consist in making a variety of hornpipe steps, accompanied by absurd antics, or affected attitudes, nor in cutting capers like a rope-dancer; by the easy, unconstrained movements of his arms and body, one might have imagined that he was merely keeping time with the music; but, on observing his feet, you beheld him making the most difficult and active steps, without appearing to be conscious of it.

Many of the ladies openly declared their disapprobation of a *married* lady's monopolizing the *best* partner in the room, and requested the sisters to introduce them
to

to the elegant Major. The second set, Lavinia danced with young Colebrook, and Fanny was the envied partner of Major Berresford.

At the conclusion of this set, supper was announced. Major Berresford divided the sisters, as they were arranging themselves at the festive board; his brilliant sallies, and the depth of penetration which his observations on the surrounding company discovered, confirmed the high opinion the young ladies had formed of him.

After supper, the party returned to the ball-room, and the dance was re-opened by Major Berresford and Lavinia, and never was that elegant exercise displayed to greater advantage by man or woman. The ball concluded with still greater spirit than it commenced; and, at five o'clock in the morning, the company partook of a comfortable breakfast, Colonel Fairfield thinking it highly necessary, after dancing so many hours. By six, the party were dispersed, all excepting the Colebrook family,

mily, who were, for that night, inmates at Fairfield.

Fortunately, the sisters reposed in separate apartments, or most probably they would have been deprived of sleep; for each had so much to say, (as is generally the case after similar entertainments), that the hours which were devoted to rest would most assuredly have been spent in conversation. As it was, they enjoyed sound and uninterrupted repose, and had the gratification of retracing in their dreams the happiness of the preceeding hours.

By twelve o'clock, the party at Fairfield were all assembled round the breakfast-table; this was not the least pleasurable part of the business, and the thousand things which every one had to say, prolonged the meal to an unusual length. The repast concluded, Sir Francis and Lady Colebrook returned home, (as was their previous intention); their son and daughter were to remain a few days longer at Fairfield.

A walk

A walk was proposed by the young people, *pour se délasser*, and they set out upon a ramble through the adjacent wood.

It had been the fervent wish of Sir Francis Colebrook and Colonel Fairfield, even from the birth of their children, that a union of the families might take place through their means: both agreed to leave the business to chance. It is true, as the character of Lavinia unfolded itself, Sir Francis felt that he should prefer her for his daughter; but he was not blind to the merits of her sister, and therefore never attempted to influence his son in favour of one more than the other.

Since his return from college, young Colebrook had been almost a constant inmate at Fairfield; but it was not until the night of the ball, that the fathers had been able to ascertain the object of his preference. His undisguised attention to *Fanny* on that evening, and his uneasiness, when he observed her appear pleased with the assiduities of other men, at once discovered

the state of his heart. Whether the lady felt a reciprocal sensation, was yet to be developed, as all the penetration of the sagacious elders had not been sufficient to enable them to ascertain this important point.

Young Colebrook, on beholding *Larntu*, had experienced the highest degree of admiration and respect for her, an emotion which was confirmed and strengthened on a farther acquaintance; but he felt that *he* was not the being who was all-sufficient to constitute *her* happiness; he felt a consciousness of *her* superiority—a sensation which, among the male part of the creation, admits rarely of the existence of a more tender sentiment.

In Fanny, Colebrook beheld a congenial spirit; she was neither *more* nor less than himself; and he fully persuaded himself that she was necessary to his happiness. He consulted his father upon the subject, who assured him, that both in Colonel Fairfield and himself, he would find sincere supporters;

supporters; but advised him to ascertain the sentiments of the young lady, before he solicited the interference of her father, as he was certain that by him no objection would be offered. Frank Colebrook perfectly coincided in his father's opinion, and determined to act accordingly. This conversation took place the morning subsequent to the ball, when Sir Francis and his son, having risen earlier than the rest of the party, accidentally encountered, as they were taking a stroll before breakfast.

all the effect that was intended, upon the person to whom they were addressed.

He replied, in a mortified tone—"I do not doubt you in the least, *Miss Fanny*."

In the preceeding part of their walk, poor Colebrook had conceived himself the happiest man existing. While laughing and playing with Fanny, he had persuaded himself he could trace a responsive affection in her behaviour; but this unfortunate dialogue put all his dreams of felicity to flight. Nothing hurt him so much as her formal address of *Mr. Colebrook*; as they always called each other by their Christian names, without attaching either *Miss* or *Mr.* This was the first difference which had occurred between them; and he attended the ladies into the house, in a more unhappy state of mind than he had ever before experienced.

They found Colonel Howard and Major Berresford engaged in a conversation with Colonel Fairfield, which was equally interesting to each of the trio; in which they
were

were canvassing the merits and demerits of various military characters, and ingeniously demonstrating the reasons, *why* they *did* or did *not* succeed in the different situations in which they had been placed.

On the entrance of the ladies, the subject was, *of course*, dropt, as these gentlemen were all too well-bred, to continue a conversation in which each of the party could not bear a part. The customary compliments over, a lively and general intercourse was kept up for some time; but was at length interrupted by Colonel Fairfield's exclaiming, in a tone of surprise, as he regarded Colebrook—"Why, Frank! what is the matter? I am afraid the fatigues of last night were too much for you—you look quite knocked-up!"

"Oh, by no means!" returned Colebrook, "I never was better in my life; but I have just recollected something, that makes it necessary that I should return home immediately."

"Well," cried the Colonel, "you have
D 4 plenty

plenty of time to go and return again before the evening."

"That will not be in my power: the business which calls me away, will prevent my returning for some days."

"Heyday!" exclaimed the Colonel, laughing, "this is extraordinary indeed! that business of such importance should have escaped your memory."

Frank looked silly, and muttered something about his father's expecting him.

"Come, come, Frank!" cried the Colonel, "this is only some nonsense you have taken into your head. I suppose the girls have affronted you, or something of equal consequence—so I shall insist on your remaining where you are."

Colebrook reddened excessively, as he assured Colonel Fairfield that he was never more mistaken; but added, he would relinquish his project of returning home that day, which he hoped would convince the Colonel he was not offended.

During this short dialogue, Fanny appeared

appeared to be totally engrossed in conversation with Major Berresford. Colonel Fairfield told his military friends, he should insist on their dining with him, provided they were not pre-engaged. The gentlemen objected on account of their dress, which they had not changed since the morning, when they had attended the regiment on a field-day : the place of exercise being situated between Fairfield and the town where they were quartered, they had left the command to an inferior officer, and repaired to the Lodge, immediately on the conclusion of the manœuvres.

Colonel Fairfield would admit of no excuse, and the gentlemen felt happy in having their objections overcome. Every one was pleased with this arrangement but Colebrook, who sincerely wished that the Major had had an *indispensable* engagement. The ladies retired to change their dress; and Colonel Howard and Major Berresford were ushered into Colonel Fairfield's dress-

sing-room, to repair the damages committed on their powder and pomatum.

At dinner, harmony and conviviality reigned in every heart but Colebrook's, who appeared lost in thought. When the ladies withdrew to the drawing-room, music was proposed by Lavinia, who, with Miss Colebrook, was singing a duet, while Fanny reclined on a sofa at a distance, when Major Berresford entered the room, exclaiming, in an animated tone, that he found it impossible to withstand the temptation to join them, when the sound of their voices reached his ear. Scarcely had he concluded these words, when the door re-opened, and Colebrook appeared, who, though his aspect bespoke him in no very *harmonious* humour, protested that wine had no charms for him, when put in competition with music.

The Major entreated the ladies to repeat the duet they were singing when he interrupted them; they immediately complied. Berresford threw himself on the sofa by

Fanny, who was amusing herself with picking a beautiful rose in pieces. The Major, in a low voice, said—"As it is the soldier's province to protect oppressed innocence, I shall certainly rescue that unfortunate rose from the miserable fate you have condemned it to."

With these words, he, with a ludicrous air of gallantry, took the rose (which she allowed him to do), and placed it in his bosom. He then quitted his seat, and advanced to the piano, where his attention was wholly engaged till the conclusion of the song. Colebrook was, during this time, standing near the instrument, with his back against the wall, apparently unconscious of what was passing.

Lavinia now begged Major Berresford to join them in a trio: he instantly complied, and convinced his auditors, that he was no less a proficient in the science of music, than he was in the minor accomplishment of dancing. After singing several songs, in which Fanny also joined,

Lavinia turned over the leaves of the music-book, in search of a lesson which the Major had requested she would play. She observed that "there was a charming accompaniment for the flute attached," and requested Colebrook would play it with her. Colebrook resolutely declined, observing, it was too difficult for him to attempt.

"I am sorry to contradict you," cried Lavinia; "but we have played it together repeatedly."

"I am not in the humour for playing now," returned Colebrook, with assumed *sang froid*: "indeed, I am not very well."

The Major regretted his not having his flute, and said he should certainly bring it with him, the next time he had the honour of visiting Fairfield.

"Oh!" exclaimed Lavinia, "that need not prevent our having the pleasure of hearing you now, for here is Mr. Colebrook's flute;" searching for it under the music which was scattered about.

At

At these words, Colebrook stepped forward, and as Lavinia was presenting the flute to Major Berresford, he took it from her, under pretence of setting it right, observing, that it was extremely out of order, and not fit to be played upon. After screwing and unscrewing it half a-dozen times, he, as if trying it, played over the prelude to the lesson; then motioning to Lavinia, he said—"Come, begin." She acquiesced, though by no means pleased with his behaviour. He accompanied her throughout the lesson, and Lavinia thought she had never heard him play it so bad.

When they had concluded, Berresford expressed his satisfaction, and Lavinia hoped (though she thought it almost impossible) that he had not remarked the excessive rudeness of young Colebrook's conduct, who, the moment he had ceased playing, very composedly took the flute completely to pieces, and put it in his pocket, observing, that it wanted repairing.

ing, and must be cleaned, before it could be played on again.

Lavinia, as this speech caught her ear, felt her colour increase to an unusual glow, and rising from the piano, she quitted the room; but returned almost immediately, with her father's flute, and presenting it to Berresford, with an enchanting smile, she exclaimed—"Now, Major Berresford, will you oblige us so much as to try this instrument? I shall not feel satisfied till I have the pleasure of hearing *you* perform."

With the utmost urbanity, the Major complied, and they recommenced this delightful recreation, occasionally substituting the harp for the piano, or all together combining to increase the harmony. The moment Major Berresford commenced his part, Colebrook strolled towards an open window, which reached to the ground, and leaning against the frame, for a few moments he remained irresolute, when he suddenly

suddenly stepped out upon the lawn, and disappeared.

Tea being announced, the veterans, who had been enjoying the delight of talking over their battles, joined the young party. Colonel Fairfield enquired for Colebrook: Lavinia answered, that she supposed he had taken a long walk, as he had quitted them some time. Colonel Fairfield observed, it was very unusual with him to quit so agreeable a party, and added—"I don't know what is the matter with the boy to day—he has not been himself since the morning."

At an early hour, Colonel Howard proposed returning home, and was feebly seconded by the Major.

"I should not allow you to leave us so soon," said Colonel Fairfield; "but I intend to send the girls early to bed, in order that they may recover the fatigues of last night; but, in future, you must never propose leaving us before supper. I trust you will not be long in repeating your
visit,

visit, as I shall, at all times, be most happy to see you *both*."

The gentlemen expressed their obligation to the Colonel for his polite hospitality, and soon after took their leave.

A light collation being spread, Colonel Fairfield and the ladies surrounded the table: still Colebrook did not appear. The Colonel again expressed his astonishment, not unaccompanied with uneasiness, a sensation in which Miss Colebrook participated.

"Perhaps," said he, "he is gone home; and yet I think he would hardly treat us so cavalierly, as to abscond without mentioning his intention to any one."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, when the door opened, and Colebrook entered.

"Where have you been, truant?" cried the Colonel; "we were all alarmed about you."

"Not *all*, I fancy," muttered Colebrook, as he approached the sideboard, and taking a chamber-

a chamber-candlestick, returned to the door.

"Will you not take something, Frank?" said the Colonel: "I am afraid you are not well."

"I thank you, Sir: I have taken a long walk, and am not inclined to eat. Good-night!"

The good-night was not addressed to any particular person. He quitted the apartment without farther opposition. The Colonel laughed, as he exclaimed—"This is the first time I ever heard that a long walk took away the appetite. I hope a night's rest will restore poor Frank to his usual spirits: he is a great favourite of mine, and I don't like to see him tormented."

Colonel Fairfield had too much penetration, not to perceive that Fanny's conduct had displeased Colebrook; he knew not in what particular, but he suspected she had been flirting with Major Berresford.

Miss

Miss Colebrook now retiring, left the father and daughters to themselves. Colonel Fairfield had purposely awaited this opportunity, as he wished, like a wise and prudent parent, to put his children on their guard against precipitating themselves into situations which might produce unhappiness. In order to introduce the subject, he observed—"I think I never beheld a young man so highly gifted, both by nature and education, as Major Berresford. From what I have observed, I have formed the most elevated opinion of him, though I do not pretend to *decide* upon so short an acquaintance. I knew his father when we were both young men; he was a fine youth, but by no means the dazzling character his son appears to be. The Honourable Mr Berresford is the second son of Lord A——; he was educated for the diplomatic line, in which he has shone very conspicuously: he is not a man of large fortune, his elder brother possessing, with the title, all the property, with the exception

tion of a mere trifle. They were never a wealthy family, and it required the whole income to support the rank of its head. The Honourable Mr. Berresford has two sons, beside the Major, who is the youngest: his eldest son has a place under government; the second is captain in the navy. Edward Berresford (the major) was brought up, until the period he went to school, with his aunt, a woman of a most amiable character: she is sister to Lord A——. She married a man of large property, who died shortly after, leaving her sole possessor of all his wealth, which is supposed to amount, at least, to a hundred thousand pounds. At the death of her husband, she, being childless, adopted Edward Berresford, with the consent of his parents, who, of course, imagines he will inherit her property. Colonel Howard, from whom I learnt many of these particulars, is personally acquainted with Berresford's aunt, Lady Maria Courtney. He says that she doats on Edward Berresford,

to

to that excess, that her whole soul is wrapt up in him; and she has repeatedly assured him, that if Edward marries with her consent, he shall possess *half* her fortune on his wedding-day, and the rest at her demise. She, no doubt, has formed the most sanguine hopes, in regard to his establishing himself; and certainly, a young man of his pretensions and expectations, may aspire to the finest woman in England. Edward is also the favourite of his father, who builds all his hopes of aggrandizing his family, upon the merits and attractions of his darling son, for whom he openly professes his partiality: his brothers, from what I can learn, are very deserving young men; but the extraordinary talents of the Major engrosses the chief part of his father's affection. Colonel Howard has known Edward Berresford from his childhood; and he tells me, that the opinion one is inclined to form of him, on his first appearance, is precisely such as, on a farther acquaintance, one shall find he merits.

Notwithstanding

Notwithstanding his mental qualifications are so superior, the noble propensities of his nature excel them; and, to use Colonel Howard's words, 'Had I a son, Edward Berresford is exactly what I should wish him to be.'

Colonel Fairfield had not proceeded thus far, without frequently pausing; but the sisters did not seem inclined to interrupt him, by offering any observation. He continued—"Under all these circumstances, I must candidly own, that I think Major Berresford a very dangerous being to introduce to the knowledge of two young girls, whose hearts, as far as I can fathom, are perfectly at liberty."

Fanny laughed; Lavinia blushed scarlet, and felt *foolish*, for the first time.

"I do not, my dear children," affectionately taking a hand of each, "I do not think you are, either of you, particularly susceptible; but the uncommon attractions of Major Berresford might ensnare hearts less alive to perfection than your's are.

But

But after what you have heard, you must be sensible, that when Berresford marries, he must select a woman of high family, and, probably, large fortune, or else disappoint the sanguine expectations of his doating relatives, with whose wishes he certainly will comply, as the only means in his power of repaying all he owes them. I have too high an opinion of the Major, to suppose he would endeavour to win the affections of an artless girl; and I should be sorry, that the common attention which every man of politeness must necessarily pay to women, should be misconstrued, and perhaps converted, by the disordered influence of passion, into a demonstration of a particular partiality. Major Berresford can never be more than a friend in my family; and as *such*, I should wish him ever to be treated and considered."

Colonel Fairfield ceased. Fanny unconsciously yawned; Lavinia remained with her eyes fixed on the carpet. The silence was broke by Fanny's exclaiming — "Well,

—"Well, papa, I suppose we may go to bed now?"

"Certainly," returned the Colonel, "it is quite time you should: had I not feared an interruption, I should have delayed this conversation till to-morrow."

Lavinia still continued lost in thought. The anxious parent bent his eyes upon her; full well he knew every feeling of her heart: the evident congeniality of sentiment and disposition, in Lavinia and Berresford, he had foreseen, would attach them to each other. Neither was he perfectly at ease in respect to Fanny, as he feared Colebrook's uneasiness arose from her having betrayed a preference for Berresford. He therefore had determined to take the earliest opportunity of warning these dear objects of parental solicitude, and crush at once all the embryo hopes which might delude them.

The extreme indifference with which Fanny had listened while he spoke, convinced him *she* was in no danger; but his penetrating

penetrating eye soon discovered that the caution was a timely one to Lavinia. For her peace of mind he entertained not the least apprehension; convinced, as he was, that after what he had told her, she would relinquish every idea of Berresford's ever being more than a friend to *her*. He knew she would not delude herself with romantic speculations: he was well acquainted with the strength of her mind, and knowing *that*, how could he for a moment suspect, that she would, with blind imbecility, encourage a *hopeless* passion? Colonel Fairfield had no idea of *unconquerable* attachments, formed on the *first* sight of an object, and rendering miserable every future period of existence, because deprived of the possession of a being, while ignorant of its being blest with one single qualification calculated to inspire affection. He had heard of such things, but was so uncharitable as to condemn all those who had been thus affected, as idiots or maniacs.

Lavinia

Lavinia was aroused from her cogitation by her sister's wishing her a good-night. On raising her eyes, they met those of her father; a conscious blush suffused her cheek, and rising precipitately, and averting her face from her father, she said—"I believe it is very late;—God bless you, papa."

The Colonel affectionately embraced her, as he had also her sister, and they parted for the night.



CHAP. V.

*Latius regnes avidum domando
 Spiritum, quam si Lybiam remotis
 Gadibus jungas, et uterque Pœnus serviat uni.*

HORACE.

.....

By virtue's precepts to controul
 The thirsty cravings of the soul,
 Is over wider realms to reign,
 Unenvied monarch, than if Spain
 You could to distant Lybia join,
 And both the Carthages were thine.

FRANCIS.

How different were the sensations produced upon the minds of the two sisters by the preceding scene! Fanny had scarcely

scarcely attended to half her father had said, so little did the subject interest her ; her mind had chiefly amused itself with the pleasure she felt at having tormented poor Colebrook, of whose sentiments in her favour she was perfectly convinced, and delighted in exercising the power she had over him. Not one thought did she give to what her father had been saying, but retired to bed more than usually pleased, under the idea that she should at least deprive Colebrook of one night's rest.

When Lavinia withdrew to her chamber, she mechanically undressed herself, and her head was reposed on her pillow, without her being sensible of any thing but the unusual distraction of her ideas, when she attempted to address her Creator, which was her constant custom before she resigned herself to insensibility. In vain did she call to mind the extraordinary blessings she enjoyed, in order to excite her gratitude to the Almighty Donor ! In vain did she endeavour to elevate her thoughts to the

incomprehensible. Being she wished to adore! some mundane recollection intruded; her father's words were indelibly engraven on her mind, and she found the utmost difficulty in expelling them, even for a moment. She felt completely dissatisfied with herself; and even with tears did she implore forgiveness of her God, for the imperfect manner in which she presumed to address him.

It was her usual practice, when she retired for the night, to recapitulate the events of the preceding day. This she had been taught as a part of her duty, and as such she ever performed it; but, on the present occasion, she was extremely puzzled, for, in the execution of one duty, she must inevitably offend against another, which was—the necessity of ceasing to dwell with delight on the scenes in which Berresford had borne a part. In recalling the events of the past day, she found that his image would inevitably obtrude itself foremost in the picture, and she therefore
resolved

resolved to pass over every thing but her father's discourse.

"Ah!" thought she, "how wisely has my father judged!—how necessary was his exhortation! No doubt his discernment penetrated my feelings! How kind, how affectionate was his caution!—Yes, my father, I am indeed indebted to you! But for this, I might have deluded myself, and believed what I wished. The effort is but trifling *now*—had this transient prepossession been increased by time and indulgence, I might have found great difficulty in subduing it, and it might have caused me some unhappiness; but I *would* have subdued it, when once convinced of its impropriety, even had the darling vision been nurtured for years."

Such were the praiseworthy and rational reflections of Lavinia, as, pressing her head closer to her pillow, and closing her eyes, she resolutely shut out all ideas calculated to enervate her mind; and courting sleep, she soon sunk into forgetfulness.

Lavinia was unlike those fair *victims* of *uncontroulable sensibility*, who *rush* into love, and become *unconsciously* attached, beyond all power of restraint; and never find it out till some accidental occurrence, or interesting situation, discovers to them the state of their hearts—when this uncontroulable sensibility prompts them, without hesitation, to break through all the ties of consanguinity—to act in open defiance of parental authority, and quit all their long-tried and affectionate friends, to follow the fortunes of one, of whose very existence they were probably ignorant but a few weeks before!

Lavinia could not be surprised into any thing. She kept too watchful a guard over her feelings, not to be perfectly aware when any change took place in them; and the moment she beheld the fascinating figure of Major Berresford, she was sensible that she felt a prepossession in his favour; and the more she saw of him, the more she was confirmed in it. Added to this, Colo-
nel

nel Howard had amused her with an animated eulogium on the Major, which convinced her she had not judged erroneously.

In every sentiment expressed by Major Berresford, Lavinia perceived a striking analogy with her own. The very expressions he made use of, and the language he adopted, altogether, was so similar to Lavinia's usual style in conversation, that it had been remarked by Colonel Fairfield and Fanny; nor is it to be wondered at, that Lavinia had been the first to make this discovery. What made her more particularly alive to a sense of her present emotion, was, that she had never before felt even a transient partiality for any one, considering them in the light of a lover. Major Berresford was the only man she had ever seen, in whose company she had been for two days, without discovering in them that which convinced her they were not formed to constitute her happiness.

The blissful visions of felicity which were stealing into Lavinia's imagination,

were completely put to flight, by the account her father had given her of Berresford's splendid expectations. She was no stoic ; if she had been, there would have been little merit in her resolutely adhering to the rule of *right* ; but she aspired to the character of a *real philosopher*, and as such, endeavoured to persuade herself that she could not feel unhappy, while performing what was her duty. Her heart *would* sometimes contradict this persuasion, but she would appease it by reflecting—" If I am not perfectly happy at this moment, I soon shall be ; on the contrary, did I act otherwise, I should be heaping up stores of misery by my imbecility."

Happy, thrice happy, would be the effects, did every female possess a parent like Colonel Fairfield, who, with that *prevoyance qu'accompagne toujours la sagesse*, would look beyond the present moment, and, ever watchful over the peace of his offspring, prevent their being placed in such situations as might require a greater exertion

exertion of mind, or effort of self-command, than, from the violence of their passions, or weakness of their intellects, they may be enabled to exert. Then would that puerile vanity which leads men to amuse themselves at the expence of inexperienced girls, cease to be gratified. That vanity, which, though considered by many as a venial fault, is, in its effects, frequently productive of evils not inferior to any produced by the most hardened villany ! So insatiable are its desires, that, unlike other passions, it is increased by gratification ; and we shall find, when contemplated through the medium of unvarnished truth, and stripped of the gaudy trappings of sophistry, that there is no single passion so detrimental to the harmony of society ! Almost every idea in the human mind is influenced, in some measure, by vanity ; and the direful propensities to envy, hatred, and revenge, by which many are actuated, will, on being traced to their foundation, most commonly be found to owe their

birth to *vanity*!—It is the root of all evil, and, as such, should be eradicated on the very first symptoms of its existence.

CHAP. VI.

Rebuts, soupçon, débats, trêve, guerre nouvelle,
Et puis nouvelle paix. Par ce portrait fidelle,
Voyez, que la raison aspireroit en vain
À fixer de l'amour le manège incertain.

PENSÉE DE CICÉRO.

It may probably have created some surprise in the reader, that Major Berresford should have so calmly passed over the impertinent behaviour of Mr. Colebrook; but when his motives for acting thus are made known, they will tend still further to demonstrate the amiable disposition, and extreme good-nature, of this accomplished young man.

Major

Major Berresford had perceived, on the night of the ball, that Colebrook was the devoted admirer of Fanny Fairfield; but as he felt not the slightest inclination to rival him, it recurred not to his imagination, till, on the following evening, when playfully taking the rose from Fanny, he accidentally cast a look towards Colebrook; he perceived his eyes fixed upon them, with an expression of jealous disquietude, that could not for moment be misinterpreted. Berresford instantly recollected the previous behaviour of Colebrook, and the uneasiness he had appeared to labour under during the preceding part of the day, and it required no great penetration to infer the cause: He saw plainly that he was an object of jealousy in the eyes of Colebrook; and his compassionate nature felt hurt at having, though unintentionally, given him pain: he instantly quitted the sofa, anxious to convince Colebrook that his suspicions were unjust. Berresford did not experience the slightest

degree of resentment against him for his foolish behaviour respecting his flute, being perfectly aware of the motive from which it had sprung.

When the party at Fairfield met at breakfast, the Colonel, with surprise, observed that Colebrook was absent. He rung the bell, and the servant entering, he enquired if Mr. Colebrook had been seen that morning?

"Yes, Sir," replied the man, putting his hand into his pocket, and taking out a note; "Mr. Colebrook went out at six o'clock this morning, Sir, and left this note to be delivered to you, Sir."

The Colonel took the note. His countenance assumed an aspect of vexation, as he cast his eyes over it; then turning to the servant, who still waited, he said—"Tell John to get my horse ready."

The man quitted the room, to obey the order.

The Colonel fixed his eyes upon his tea, which he continued to stir, with an air of abstraction.

abstraction. Fanny eyed the note wistfully, when Miss Colebrook enquired, where her brother was gone to? Colonel Fairfield re-opened the note, and read as follows—

“I hope my dear Colonel Fairfield will excuse my precipitate departure, but indispensable business renders my return home necessary.

F. COLEBROOK.”

Thursday morning,
Six o'clock.

Colonel Fairfield folded up the note, and fixing his eyes upon Fanny, he said, in a displeased tone—“I see, very plainly, that something has been done to offend Mr. Colebrook. I shall ride over to the Hall, and insist on his accompanying me back, or informing me of his reasons for absenting himself from Fairfield.”

Fanny's eyes sunk under the keen glance of her father's, and she wished, with all her heart,

she flew to the piano, and began rattling away a country-dance, unconscious that she was playing the same part over and over again. She thought they were a long time, and paused to listen;—she heard their voices in the hall, and the unfortunate instrument was struck with added violence: happily Colebrook now entered, as, in all human probability, another minute would have destroyed half the strings.

“ Well,” said Fanny, starting up, “ I hope you are in a better humour than you was yesterday?”

This unexpected address completely disconcerted Colebrook; but without giving him time to recover himself, she advanced towards him with a bewitching smile, and holding out her hand, she cried —“ Come! I think you have been sulky quite long enough; so now, you know, we are friends again.”

The look which accompanied these words was perfectly irresistible to poor Colebrook, who ardently pressed the proffered

ferred hand ; and again he thought himself the *happiest* of men !

When Colonel Fairfield entered, he was greatly pleased, though not much surprised, to perceive Colebrook restored to even more than his usual spirits ;—he justly concluded that all difference had been accommodated between Fanny and his young friend, and he enquired no further into the affair.

On reaching Colebrook Hall, the Colonel had found Frank Colebrook alone in the library, who informed him that Sir Francis and Lady Colebrook were gone to meet his brother, who was coming home for the Midsummer holidays. On being questioned as to his motives for quitting Fairfield, Colebrook appeared extremely embarrassed ; but when the Colonel told him he should expect him to return with him, or plead some very ostensible cause for his non-compliance, he exclaimed, with vehemence, that “ no one had offended him at Fairfield, and he should be
very

very sorry any member of the family should be implicated upon his account."

"Then of course you will accompany me back," rejoined the Colonel.

Colebrook no longer hesitated, but immediately ordered his horse; and endeavoured, by every means in his power, during their short ride, to convince Colonel Fairfield that he was perfectly at ease.

Colebrook had perceived, the moment Colonel Fairfield had entered the library, that there was a resolute air in his manner, which boded no good;—he saw that he was determined to investigate the reason of his extraordinary behaviour, and he trembled lest, through him, the object of his love should be rendered, for a moment, uneasy; this it was that determined him to acquiesce in the Colonel's wishes.—Strange inconsistency of passion! Colebrook had suddenly absented himself from Fairfield, wishing, with all his soul, that his absence might render Fanny miserable; and he returned with almost equal precipitation,

pitiation, because he apprehended that his neglecting to do so might expose her to her father's displeasure, which he well knew would make her very unhappy.

Some days elapsed, when Colonel Howard and Major Berresford were invited by Colonel Fairfield to spend the ensuing day at the Lodge. They had called once since the last time they had dined there, but, unfortunately, all the family were out. A polite assent was returned by both the gentlemen to the invitation: and the next day, some time before the dinner-hour, Colonel Howard and Major Berresford made their appearance at Fairfield.

Colebrook anticipated fresh uneasiness at the sight of Major Berresford; but his fears were groundless, as the Major, during the whole day, attached himself particularly to Lavinia. Did she sing, he listened in breathless attention, or accompanied her with the most exquisite pathos;—he watched her every look, and her conversation engrossed his exclusive regard. When
any

any of the rest of the party expressed their sentiments or opinions, he appeared absent, and unconscious of what they were saying; but the moment Lavinia spoke, he, with the most lively animation, assured her of his perfect coincidence in her opinion; and, with an expression of delighted astonishment, declared, that when in company with her, there was not the least necessity for him to express his ideas, as it would but be the echo of her words.

Lavinia, with pain, perceived this warmth in his address, and how to check it she knew not; for there was in Major Berresford's manner an indescribable something, which demonstrated that he thought it next to impossible that his attentions could be disagreeable—an easy air of self-complaisance, arising from a consciousness of superiority.

Let not the reader imagine that Major Berresford was either presuming or self-conceited, for he was perfectly free from those intolerable defects. That his manner betrayed a conscious superiority, or
certainty

certainty of pleasing, was wholly unknown to himself; and was the inevitable result of the extraordinary attention he had always been accustomed to meet with from females of the first distinction, by whom he had been universally encouraged to suppose himself irresistible. Though Major Berresford in his heart despised the women who could demean themselves so low, as to seek to ingratiate themselves into his affections by flattery and adulation, yet the conviction that he was sought after and admired by the sex, produced a certain air in his demeanour when addressing them, which evinced that a rebuff was the last thing he expected. This it was which rendered it particularly difficult for Lavinia to repel his advances; and she perceived, with added uneasiness, that the embarrassment with which she received his attention, seemed rather to please than discourage him; he, no doubt, imputing it to bashfulness or timidity.

Colonel Fairfield perceived, with pain,
that

that Lavinia would have a more trying task to perform, than he had first suspected. He resolved not to encourage the intimacy between his family and the Major, and to ask him as seldom as he could, consistent with common politeness, to his house. After the general invitation which he had, on a former occasion, given him, with Colonel Howard, he knew it would be impossible to put an immediate stop to his visits; but he determined, by degrees, to withdraw his civilities, which he began to apprehend were ill-bestowed; and that he had been mistaken, when he conceived Major Berresford seeking to gratify an inexcusable vanity.

There was to be a ball at Colebrook Hall on the fourth of June, in honour of his Majesty's birth-day, which was now within three days; at *this* Colonel Fairfield knew he could not avoid, with his family, being present; he knew also that the Major would be there—but after this, he resolved that Lavinia should not frequent
any

any societies, which could consistently be avoided, where she was likely to encounter Berresford, who, he sincerely hoped, would soon see the impropriety of his marked behaviour, and render all further caution unnecessary. It was not so much for Lavinia's peace that he apprehended, as for the unpleasant business of having it reported that she was to be married to Major Berresford, which he knew would be the case, when they were seen together, apparently on so intimate a footing; and he was greatly disquieted at the idea of a report so perfectly devoid of foundation being believed.

The gentlemen did not quit Fairfield till a late hour, and when they shook hands with Colonel Fairfield, at their departure, Major Berresford was too much engrossed with his own ideas, to be sensible of the want of cordiality there was in the manner in which Colonel Fairfield shook his hand, nor his omitting to express a desire of soon again seeing him.

The

The Major's subsequent conduct, however, evinced that he did not consider a repeated invitation as necessary, for he called every morning which intervened before the ball at Colebrook Hall.

This greatly distressed Colonel Fairfield, who knew Berresford must think it the height of inhospitality, that he did not, on either of these occasions, invite him to stay to dine; he was convinced the Major expected it, and the unkindness he was obliged to be guilty of in this instance, prevented his behaving with that coldness towards him which he wished to preserve. The brilliant wit, animated warmth, and good humoured confidence of Major Berresford, rendered it one of the most painful and difficult tasks to behave towards him with indifference and constraint; and so repugnant was this necessity to Colonel Fairfield, obliged thus to act in opposition to his feelings, that he felt a degree of anxiety bordering on unhappiness whenever Major Berresford was present. But Berresford never, for an instant,

stant, supposed it possible his presence could be disagreeable; and always imputed the Colonel's not inviting him to stay, to some prior engagement among the neighbouring families, which were numerous in the vicinity of Fairfield.

The night of the ball arrived. On their road to the Hall, Colonel Fairfield said, in a low voice, to Lavinia, who was seated on the same side the carriage—"Do not, if you can possibly avoid it, dance more than one set with Major Berresford.—I shall be extremely vexed if he makes his particularity to you obvious."

Lavinia replied that it would be equally disagreeable to herself; and assured her father, nothing, on her part, should countenance the Major's behaviour.

On their arrival at the Hall, before even the carriage door was opened, they beheld Berresford on the steps of the mansion, prepared to hand them out.

Colonel Fairfield alighted, and turned round to assist Lavinia, but this Berresford

would not allow, and seizing her hand, which was extended to her father, he conducted her up the steps. Young Colebrook now appeared, who, with his sister, had returned home the day before. He received the hand of Fanny from Colonel Fairfield, who was conducting her. On quitting her, the Colonel advanced to Lavinia, saying—"Take my arm, my love."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Major, "I cannot allow that; I must have the honour of supporting Miss Fairfield in her *entrée*.—There is Colebrook conducting Miss Fanny—why may not I be equally happy?"

Had Major Berresford caught a glance of the Colonel's face, he would at once have discovered how extremely disagreeable his conduct was to him; but, anxious to join, with his fair companion, the scene of gaiety, he was looking eagerly towards the room where the company were assembled. Lavinia trembled universally, and looked at her father, with an expression of distress and apprehension. He observed her anxiety,

ity, and being sensible that he must either openly affront the Major before a concourse of servants, and many of the guests who were momentarily entering, or allow him to proceed, he exclaimed, in an accent of displeasure he could not controul —“ Then, Lavinia, you must go on, for we are stopping up the entry.”

The moment she reached the saloon, the Colonel took Lavinia's vacant hand, hoping, in some measure, to do away the effect which her being supported by the Major alone, would have on the surrounding observers. Berresford did not relinquish his post till Lavinia, having paid her compliments to Lady Colebrook, was conducted by him to a seat, when he very composedly walked round behind her, and leaning on the back of her chair, remained immoveable.

Nothing could be more distressing to Lavinia, than this undisguised demonstration of a preference, which she was convinced would only terminate in rendering

her an object of ridicule to the envious and ill-natured, and of commiseration to the amiable. Her father continued close to her; but even this had an appearance of particularity, and it was with pleasure she perceived a vacant chair, next a lady with whom she was acquainted; she instantly quitted her seat, and under pretence of having something of consequence to communicate to this lady, she took possession of the place next her. By this means she thought she should avoid Berresford, at least till the dancing commenced; but again her prudence was rendered ineffectual, for Berresford, perceiving she did not mean to return, wandered round the room, and after making a few civil speeches to some ladies he knew, and who happened to be seated near Lavinia, he planted himself before her, and entered into conversation with her and her friend, to whom she introduced him, in order that his attentions should be divided. This position he maintained till the signal for dancing was given,

given, when presenting his arm to Lavinia, who some days before he had engaged for the first set, they joined the dancers.

Never had Lavinia felt so disinclined to exert herself—she was constrained and embarrassed. She perceived the eyes of many of the company bent upon her and Major Berresford, with an expression which convinced her they were observed. Her father's countenance, instead of denoting the pleasing harmony that reigned within, as it was wont to do on these festive occasions, bore evident marks of vexation and mortified pride; and Lavinia felt altogether so thoroughly discomposed, that she would have given worlds to have been emancipated from her unpleasant situation.

It was impossible for Major Berresford not to perceive her uneasiness, and he enquired, with the utmost solicitude, if she was unwell? observing, how different she appeared on a former occasion, when he had had the pleasure of dancing with her.

She waved the question, by replying—

that there always was a necessity for one's exerting oneself, in one's own house, which made one appear in better spirits.

The Major saw that his remark distressed her; and he concluded, by the aspect of Colonel Fairfield, that some difference had occurred between him and Lavinia; never, for one moment, conceiving it possible that he himself caused their mutual concern. Insensibly he became infected by the gloom which hung over Lavinia; and her averted looks and absent air, when replying to his conversation, soon convinced him she was unhappy; and so completely did he participate in every feeling of her heart, that all his gaiety was at once converted into apprehension, and he stood silently by her side, watching her every look.

When the dance was concluded, Berresford conducted his partner to a seat, and Colonel Fairfield, who had followed them, instantly took the place next Lavinia, which Berresford was about to have occupied; but the Major, far from being offended,

fended, was pleased to perceive Colonel Fairfield address his daughter, as he fancied it would be the means of restoring that harmony between them, which he supposed had been interrupted.

He now left his partner to procure her some refreshment, and Colonel Fairfield enquired of Lavinia, who she was going to dance with?

"I am not engaged," answered Lavinia.

"Not engaged!" echoed the Colonel; "you surprise me;—you always used to be engaged for the whole evening, almost as soon as you appeared."

He paused, but Lavinia continued silent; after a minute, the Colonel added—

"But upon reflection, I do not wonder at it; for Major Berresford has so completely monopolized you, that I suppose every one looks upon you as his property, and they will not ask you to dance, for fear of offending."

Lavinia regarded her father with the

most supplicating look, as she exclaimed—
“What can I do?”

“Do not distress yourself, my love,” replied the Colonel; “it is not your fault: I will endeavour to procure you a partner for the next set, but I fear all that I should chuse to ask are by this time engaged; if so, you will be obliged to dance again with the Major; for to sit down with him would look still more particular, as I doubt not he would refuse to dance, as he seems resolved to make his behaviour as conspicuous as possible.”

Colonel Fairfield now quitted Lavinia, to go in search of a partner for her; and Berresford approached, with some lemonade—
“I hope this will quite restore you,” exclaimed he, presenting the glass.

“I assure you I am perfectly well,” replied she, accepting the beverage; and the Major began to hope that all was right again.

Colonel Fairfield returned, and whispered

pered Lavinia that he could find no one disengaged for that set; but that for all the ensuing ones, Sir Francis, to whom he had imparted his wishes, would find her partners.

Lavinia felt, in some measure, relieved by this account. The music struck up, and the Major presented himself to conduct her to her place in the dance, as if he considered it as a thing of *course* that she was to be his partner, for this, as well as the preceding set. The idea that she should be released from his assiduities at the conclusion, enabled Lavinia to get through it with more apparent pleasure than she had the former.

The announcing of supper at the end of this dance, prolonged, for some time, her embarrassing situation;—after which she was successively engaged to different gentlemen; by which, though she avoided dancing with the Major, she was not freed from his attentions, as he declined dancing after supper, and resolutely maintained his

post behind her, as she proceeded up the dance, and was always ready to receive her when she had reached the bottom.

Most happy was Lavinia when the carriage was announced which was to convey them home. Never had she passed so uncomfortable an evening—never before had she been compelled to act in direct opposition to her inclinations, and treat, with feigned coldness and indifference, *him* who, of all created beings, she felt most congenial to her soul.

In her waking moments, she never permitted herself to encourage those visions of felicity which the deluding voice of Hope was ever ready to whisper to her heart. But whenever she resigned herself to the influence of sleep, the image of Berresford would instantly present itself—every prudential motive for banishing him from her mind was done away ; and often would the delight she experienced in listening to his insinuating voice, which, in eloquent language, assured her of his affection,

fection, awake her from the blissful dream. But not with sleep did the impression made by pleasing illusion terminate;—in spite of the utmost efforts of reason, she felt her mind soften by the remembrance of the scene which was constantly recurring to her fancy, and which the presence of Berresford always most forcibly recalled.

Fanny was the only one of the Fairfield party, who returned from the ball pleased with the evening's entertainments. She had enjoyed the satisfaction of putting young Colebrook *in* and *out* of humour about a dozen times in the course of the night; and though she had perceived, by the aspects of her father and sister, that something was amiss—and this, while she observed it, was some alloy to her pleasure—yet, as she thought the cause a trifling one, for she suspected it was on account of Berresford, the surrounding scene soon obliterated this transient impression.

Sleep refused its renovating powers to Lavinia. Well she knew her father's dis-

position ; and certain she was, that he would take effectual measure to terminate their mutual inquietude. What this measure might be, she was totally at a loss to conceive ; and tears gushed from those eyes which had been wont to express only gentle serenity, or animated delight.

Colonel Fairfield had made up his mind from the moment he entered Colebrook Hall ; he took one night to weigh and consider the best mode of accomplishing his design—and the next day witnessed its execution.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

What art thou, dubious power, that to the earth-
Now sinks the sadden'd heart, now lifts it high ;
At once of human and of heavenly birth ?
Mortal, thy sire—thy mother of the sky ;
As borne by seraph Hope through fields of air,
Or plung'd in caverns by the fiend Despair ?

.....

Give me the worst to hear, or best to know ;
This dread delay unfits the soul to bear.

At breakfast Colonel Fairfield informed his daughters that if Major Berresford called during the morning, there was no occasion for their seeing him, as he *himself* should remain at home expressly for that purpose.

Lavinia's

Lavinia's heart beat violently at these words, and the tea-cup she was raising to her lips was with difficulty replaced on the table by her trembling hand. The moment breakfast was finished, she retired to her chamber, for she felt unable to conceal her agitation. According to her usual system, she endeavoured to distract her thoughts, by attempting various employments, but all in vain; she found it impossible to retain her calmness, and she paced her chamber in the most painful expectation; each turn casting a look towards the avenue, which was discernable from her window. At length the great gate opened, and Major Berresford, followed by his servant, appeared. Lavinia could scarcely breathe; in a few minutes she heard the horses stop before the entrance, and shortly after the parlour door shut. Lavinia swallowed a glass of water, and then seating herself, she leaned her elbows on a table before her, and pressing her hands to her forehead, she continued for some minutes, when

when the noise of horses again roused her, and starting up, she gazed at the window, though without approaching it. She beheld Major Berresford galloping down the avenue; before he had proceeded far, he turned his head to call his dog, who appeared half-inclined to remain behind him; she fancied she perceived a flush of indignation on his countenance, and she exclaimed—"Oh God! what misery have I been the cause of!"

A knock at the door at this moment startled her; her father's voice requested admission—on entering, he held out his hand to her, saying—"Well, my love, I hope you will suffer no further uneasiness on Major Berresford's account. I will repeat to you the short conversation I have just had with him, and I think you will approve of what I said."

Colonel Fairfield informed his daughter of all that had passed between himself and Major Berresford—a communication I shall

shall give the reader with rather more circumlocution.

On the Major being ushered into the library where Colonel Fairfield received him, he enquired for the young ladies?

"They are at home," replied the Colonel; "but as I wished to have a few moments' private conversation with you, I requested them to retire."

Berresford bowed, and the Colonel proceeded.

"You will perhaps be surprised, Berresford, at what I am going to say; but when you have considered the matter as attentively as I have, I am sure you will see my conduct in a right light."

The Major again bowed.

"I shall preface the subject no longer, as I feel anxious to conclude the unpleasant task—your particular attention to Lavinia distresses me in the highest degree."

Berresford regarded the Colonel with a look of astonishment, who continued—

"A repe-

“ A repetition of similar conduct would give rise to reports, which, as they *can* have no foundation, would be extremely detrimental to my family.”

“ Good God ! Colonel Fairfield, you astonish me beyond every thing !”

“ I said you would be surprised ; but I am well acquainted with the views your father and Lady Maria Courtney have formed for you ; and it is my ardent desire that you should not disappoint their expectations. While you preserve the same manner both to Fanny and Lavinia, I shall be extremely happy to receive your visits ; but if you find that to be impracticable, forgive me, if I declare, that I should prefer your totally absenting yourself from Fairfield.”

Major Berresford rose from his seat ; indignation was depicted on his countenance as he exclaimed—“ Your conduct, Colonel Fairfield, is so perfectly inexplicable, and your address so totally unexpected, that I am wholly at a loss for language to
express

express the feelings it has excited. How I have merited the opinion you have formed of me, I know not; but be assured, Sir, I shall never again intrude myself into your society, while my presence can prove either detrimental or unwelcome to any member of your family.—Good morning to you, Sir."

With these words he quitted the room and house, and taking his horse from the stable himself, he immediately departed; leaving his servant, who was enjoying himself in the kitchen, to follow at his leisure, which he did, very much surprised at his master's precipitate flight.

Colonel Fairfield, having related the preceding dialogue to Lavinia, concluded with the following words:—"I am sorry to find that I formed too exalted an opinion of Major Berresford; I made some excuses for his conduct in my own head, imputing it chiefly to want of reflection; and I really thought that when his eyes were opened to the consequences
it

it might produce, he would have been rather sorry than offended; but he is like the rest of mankind, and cannot bear to be told of his faults. I must own, I should have preferred, had a choice been allowed, that his intimacy with us should have ceased by degrees; as a total cessation of visits, so suddenly, may create some surprise in those who are unacquainted with the cause, and perhaps give room for unpleasant remarks; yet I know not how I could have acted otherwise with propriety."

The Colonel pronounced the last sentence in a dubious tone, as if sorry for what he had been obliged to do, yet glad that it was over. Lavinia pressed her father's hand, and exclaimed, with forced composure—"You were quite right, my dear Sir, and now let us banish the ungrateful subject for ever."

"Be it so, my love," returned the Colonel, and added—"If you are disposed for a walk, I will call your sister, and we will

will go over to the Hall, and see how they all are, after their fatigues."

Lavinia offered no objection, and the Colonel went to summon Fanny.

Many of the tender female readers will conclude, as a thing of course, that Lavinia, after composedly locking her door, *prostrated* herself on her couch, gave way to an agony of tears, and set her ingenuity to work to find out an excuse for not accompanying her father, that she might *enjoy* the *exquisite delight* of indulging her *soul's torments* ! But how will their gentle nature recoil, how will their *mellifluous* tongues exclaim against the *apathy* of my Lavinia, when I tell them, that on her father's quitting the apartment, she opened a band-box, without any gesture which denoted despair, and taking out her bonnet, she tied it on, and drawing on her gloves, she took up her parasol, and walked calmly down stairs. I will not deny, that, while equipping herself, she swallowed several times successively, and her bosom heaved,

heaved, as if agitated by a convulsive affection; but this weakness was quickly repelled, and she joined her father and sister with *apparent* composure. The moment of trial was over—*certainly* had succeeded to suspense—Hope no longer whispered that the *denouement* between her father and the Major would *perhaps* lead to an explanation, which *might* prove that they had judged erroneously in supposing Berresford not at liberty to chuse for himself. It had also been discovered that he was not the ingenuous, amiable character she had imagined him to be. He had voluntarily declared he should no longer frequent their society; and this in itself was a plain demonstration that his assiduity to her was merely the result of vanity;—had he entertained the smallest degree of affection for her, he would have endeavoured to explain his conduct; and instead of seizing the opportunity to quarrel with her father, and by that means at once terminate all connexion between them, he would have

essayed

essayed to conciliate and soften him. These ideas flew, with the rapidity of lightning, through the mind of Lavinia, and she resolved to banish for ever from her breast that image, which, from the first moment it had gained admission, had deprived her of peace.

This day passed away much better than could be expected. The Colonel exerted himself in an unusual manner, and kept up the conversation with life and gaiety. He had insisted on bringing back Colebrook and his sister from the Hall, and he took every means in his power to banish unpleasant reflections from the mind of his beloved Lavinia.

The evening was concluded with music; Lavinia played divinely on the harp, which, together with the piano forte and flute, formed a concert well calculated to dispel all gloomy retrospection.

Lavinia did *not* pass a sleepless night. On laying her head on her pillow, she called to mind the pleasure which must
ever

ever result from a strict adherence to propriety; and under the pleasing calm produced by this consolatory idea, she fell asleep.

Three days passed without any circumstance worthy of note occurring. Colonel Howard had obtained a short leave of absence, and was gone to town; the other officers of the regiment were none of them on an intimate footing at Fairfield; and its inhabitants were *all apparently* restored to the peaceable state they had enjoyed before the arrival of the regiment in the neighbourhood. Young Colebrook and his sister were still inmates at Fairfield Lodge; and the former began to flatter himself he was gaining ground in the affections of his tantalizing mistress.

CHAP. VIII.

What pure and white-wing'd agents of the sky,
Who rule the springs of sacred sympathy,
Inform congenial spirits when they meet ?
Sweet is their office, as their nature sweet !

ROGERS' *Pleasures of Memory*—

ON the morning of the fourth day, breakfast being concluded, Colebrook, his sister, and Fanny, set out upon a long walk ; the weather being excessively hot, Lavinia declined accompanying them. As soon as they were gone, she took out her work, and requested her father, who was just unpacking some new publications he had received

ceived from London, to oblige her by reading one of them aloud. He immediately complied, and selecting the production of one of their favourite authors, their attention was very soon wholly absorbed in the interesting subject.

The sound of a horse's feet on the gravel before the house, at length caused Lavinia to raise her eyes ;—a stroke of electricity could not have produced a more violent start, than the sight of the object she beheld. She sprung from the sofa on which she was seated, and leaving her work scattered in every part of the room, escaped into the library, which communicated with the breakfast-parlour. In vain Colonel Fairfield vociferated—"What is the matter? Good God, what is the matter?" No answer could he obtain, and he was about to follow Lavinia, when his steps were arrested by the opening of the opposite door, and "Major Berresford" was announced!

The Colonel himself could not forbear

starting at the name, so totally unexpected was this visit.

Major Berresford entered with a frigid bow, which the Colonel returned with equal formality, saying—"I hope I see you well, Major Berresford ;—take a seat, if you please."

The Major seated himself without speaking, and both remained silent ; when the Colonel, wishing to dissipate their mutual embarrassment, said, for the sake of saying something—"You must have found the road very dusty."

The Major hemmed twice, and his countenance became flushed as he pronounced—"This is not a visit of form, Colonel Fairfield, but of business.—Yes," he continued, with animation, "business of the utmost consequence to my future peace !"

He paused, and taking two letters from his bosom, he added—"I should not have presumed to have intruded upon you, after what passed at our last interview, had I not been fraught with these credentials, which,

which, I flatter myself, possess the power of restoring me to your good opinion, the loss of which has given me greater pain than any circumstance of my preceding life."

His voice faltered at the concluding words. The sensations of Colonel Fairfield were indefinable—for the *first* time he felt as if he had committed an injury; contradictory emotions rose in opposition to this, and he knew not what to say, or even how to look.—Major Berresford again addressed him.

"If you think it worth your while to peruse these letters, they will more fully explain to you the motives of my past conduct, and the nature of my present views, than any thing I can say on the subject."

He here presented the letters to Colonel Fairfield, who received them with a trembling hand, for the agitation of his spirits could not be concealed; and in a concili-

ating tone, he begged the Major to reseal himself.

“That which is addressed to Lady Maria Courtney,” resumed Berresford, “must be read the first; it is the copy of one I dispatched to her Ladyship, on the evening subsequent to my last visit at Fairfield—I preserved it expressly for your inspection. That which is addressed to myself is the answer;—I received it by this morning’s post.”

Colonel Fairfield replied not; but opening the epistle bearing Lady Maria Courtney’s address, he read as follows:—

Lymington, June 3.

“THE contents of my last letter to you, my dearest Madam, has, I am confident, in a great measure prepared you for what I am about to communicate. I informed you, in that, of the delightful society I had met with in the circle of Colonel

airfield's family ; and the enthusiastic
description I gave you of one of its mem-
bers must to one possessed of your deep
penetration, have plainly demonstrated the
existence of an animated attachment. In

answer, you playfully rallied me on
my *enchanted*, as you termed it, for Miss
Meld ; but it was in terms which I
plainly obviously perceive, that you rather
endeavored to encourage than repel my pres-
ent passion. Secure of your approbation,
I could not doubt of my father's, over
and over again I know you have unbounded influ-

No obstacle presenting itself which
might render my indulging my passion im-
proper, I have given the reins to my affec-
tion ; nor have I taken the smallest pains
to conceal my sentiments from the world,
but rather gloried in the opportunity of
expressing my attachment, to an object so

elevated her in my estimation:—She is ~~the~~ the only being I ever saw, who was ~~all I~~ ~~I~~ I could wish for, in the wife of my bosom! ~~I~~ ~~I~~—on her my future felicity wholly de—~~pend~~ pends; and I address you, my most es—~~teem~~ teemed and indulgent friend, to entreat ~~that~~ you to confirm your approbation of my ~~my~~ sentiments, and exert yourself to obtain ~~in~~ my father's consent to my wishes, which ~~I~~ ~~I~~ I am almost certain he will not refuse; for ~~for~~ has he not, like you, uniformly sacrificed ~~ed~~ his own views, when they were in opposi—~~i~~ tion to my ideas of happiness?—Well ~~I~~ I know the liberality of your mind, and the ~~the~~ affection you bear me: Relying on that ~~I~~ I scruple not to address you with confi—
dence. I only wait your answer, which ~~I~~ I doubt not will be a *favourable* one, to acquaint Colonel Fairfield with the nature of my pretensions, who, I have reason to suppose, would peremptorily refuse to listen to me, if not previously assured of your and my father's concurrence.

“ Adieu, dearest Madam. Forget not
that

that I am a lover—an ardent, impatient lover! and let your promptitude in replying to *this*, equal all your former kindness—I cannot wish for more!

Your most grateful and affectionate,
EDWARD COURTNEY BERRSFORD."

Colonel Fairfield perused this letter with the deepest attention; then deliberately folded it up, and laid it on the table. He held the answer in his hand; his eyes were fixed upon the superscription, but he delayed to open it;—his face was flushed with the agitation of contending emotions—an air of *constraint* marked his features;—he seemed desirous of saying something, yet appeared at a loss how to express himself; he retained this attitude for a few seconds, when Major Berresford exclaimed—"Will you not read the answer, Sir?"

"Certainly!" replied the Colonel, with emphasis, and immediately opened the sheet.

June 7,
Upper Grosvenor-street.

“ You judged rightly, my dear boy, when you supposed me acquainted with your sentiments for Lavinia Fairfield ;—your first letter on the subject fully informed me of the secret, which you yourself, at that time, was scarcely sensible of ; since which, I have received a most brilliant account of the charms of your *dulcinea*, and the violence of your passion, from Colonel Howard, who called on me a few days since. He was, at first, averse to speaking on the subject, and feigned *ignorance*, no doubt concluding I should be greatly incensed against *you* ; but I speedily satisfied him on that head, and he then candidly told me all he had observed. He said, he thought it impossible that the lady *could* be insensible to your attractions ; (*there* I perfectly agreed with him ;) yet, he added, that he could not perceive any certain

certain indication of a partiality in her behaviour, as she appeared greatly embarrassed by your assiduities. He further added, that Colonel Fairfield was evidently distressed by your attention to his daughter, at which he was by no means surprised; as he himself had informed Colonel Fairfield, that your father and myself had formed the most ambitious plans for your aggrandizement, from which he very naturally must have concluded that your behaviour to Miss Fairfield was the result of vanity.

‘Such,’ continued Colonel Howard, ‘was the state of affairs when I left the country; but I should rather suppose, (if, as you say, Berresford is assured of your approbation,) that he has, by this time, made known his views to Colonel Fairfield: if he has not, I am certain Fairfield will not allow of a continuance of his visits, for I know him to be a man of the strictest honour, and one who would scorn

G 5

the

the alliance of a Prince, whose family were averse to a connexion with his.'

"I replied, that I had the highest opinion of Colonel Fairfield, and that I doubted not I should speedily receive from you a full account of the whole business; for I own I thought my Edward would act *decisively* in the most important action of his life, without farther consulting one, who has ever made *his* happiness the first object of her consideration;—your letter which I received yesterday, proves the justice of my conclusion.

"It is true, I *had* formed the most ambitious plans for your aggrandizement; but if your felicity is incompatible with those views, perish for ever all thoughts of elevation by such means! No! my Edward needs not the *borrowed* lustre to be derived from exalted and extensive connexions. He, in *himself*, is great! 'Tis *he* must reflect lustre on all related to him; while the brilliancy of his own character admits not of

of increase ! To the *undiscerning*, this would appear the language of a fond old woman in her dotage ; but could they, like me, have witnessed the corruscations of thy ingenuous nature, even from the first dawn of opening reason, they would acknowledge it to be the language of truth. But what am I about ?—like other good folks, when I have once mounted my *hobby-horse*, I never know when to dismount : but now for the *important* subject.

“ As soon as I had perused your letter, I ordered the carriage, and proceeded to Park-lane. I was so fortunate as to find your father alone in his study. With very little *tergiversation*, I acquainted him with the purport of my visit, and *pathetically* pourtrayed your *sentiments* and *sensations* ; concluding by declaring it was my determination to espouse your cause with all my interest.

“ The decided terms in which I expressed myself, had the desired effect upon my brother ; and after a moment's hesitation,

he said—‘Certainly, I must confess you have an indisputable right to dispose of Edward, whom you have ever cherished with maternal solicitude; particularly as you have, with equal liberality, declared your intention of making him your heir. Undoubtedly I shall never oppose any connexion which you are pleased to approve; but I really imagined, from what you have so often said, on the subject of Edward’s marrying, that you had some splendid alliance in view for him.’

‘You were perfectly right,’ replied I; ‘some ambitious speculations were afloat in my brain; but they were all put to flight, the moment I was convinced of Edward’s attachment to Miss Fairfield, for whose family I feel the highest respect; and shall be proud to acknowledge them as my relations.’

‘Oh, certainly!’ cried my brother; ‘most certainly! I have the most flattering opinion of Colonel Fairfield, whose merits as a man and a soldier, *all* who have ever
heard

Heard of him must acknowledge. It is true, that the connexion with the Duke of A——'s family, which Edward had it in his power to have formed last winter; would, in the eye of the world, have been considered what is termed a better match for him.'

"I at once terminated all your father's regrets on this head, by saying—'The Duke's second daughter certainly took not the smallest pains to conceal her partiality for Edward; and probably a union between them would have been approved by his Grace; but I cannot agree in allowing that it would have been a *better* match for Edward, for the fortune Lady Amelia will possess does not near equal *that* which I have destined for my nephew; but had he married into the Duke's family, I certainly should have considered him as sufficiently provided for, and I should have divided my property between his brothers.'

"Your father seemed surprised at this declaration, which, *entre nous*, was a great story,

story, but it perfectly reconciled him to relinquishing all desire of a connexion with his Grace's family. We conversed some time longer on the subject, and at last parted, both precisely of the same opinion.

"You are now at liberty to make known your sentiments to Colonel Fairfield whenever you think proper. I shall be all impatience till I hear from you again; when, if every thing succeeds to your wishes, I shall write to Colonel Fairfield, as will also your father, who has desired me to leave a space for him to add a few lines,

"I cannot conclude without congratulating you, my dear Edward, upon your extreme good fortune, in having met with an object, *such as I am sure Miss Fairfield must be*, to inspire a fervent passion in *your* breast. I had almost despaired of encountering a being worthy to be trusted with your happiness, among the females of the present day. God bless you, my child !

child ! may the utmost success crown all your wishes, and ' smiling years proclaim the blessing heard.'

Yours ever most affectionately,

MARIA COURTNEY.

" P. S. It is my particular wish that you should shew this epistle to Colonel Fairfield, that, by it, he may be convinced of my anxiety to claim an affinity to him ; and also, to evince the high value I set on *him*, whom I request him to receive as a *son-in-law*.

" My brother will acquaint your mother with this affair, who, we may be certain, will offer no objection."

To this was subjoined the following lines from the Hon. Mr. Berresford :—

" MY DEAREST SON,

" Unavoidable business has compelled me to prolong your impatience.

tience. I had not one moment to myself all yesterday, but I take the earliest opportunity, this morning, to assure you of *mine* and your mother's perfect coincidence with your wishes. I beg you will assure Colonel Fairfield of my high consideration, and of the satisfaction I should experience at a union of our families.

E. M. BERRESFORD."

During the time Colonel Fairfield had been perusing the above, Berresford had watched every turn of his countenance, which plainly demonstrated the feelings of his heart. Contending emotions rendered the Colonel silent for a few moments after he had concluded—sorrow, for having, even for an instant, mistrusted the exalted being before him—delight, at the prospect of felicity held out to the darling of his heart, in the possession of an object so calculated to insure her happiness, almost overcame him, and for awhile he was incapable

capable of expressing himself. At length rising, and advancing, with extended hands, to the Major, he exclaimed—"Berresford, I have injured you; can you forgive me?"

The Major seized the proffered hands, and pressing them with ardour, he replied—"Mention it no more; say but you think me worthy your alliance, and I shall be completely recompensed for every mortification."

"To say I think you *worthy* my alliance, would weakly indeed express the sense I have of your merits, and how highly I consider myself distinguished by your proposals. But you must allow me to explain my *apparently* unjustifiable conduct."

Berresford interrupted him, by exclaiming, with vehemence—"My dear Colonel, there is not the least necessity: I see through the whole business—you were deceived by Colonel Howard's account—yes, yes, I understand exactly how it was, and I assure you, you stand perfectly acquitted
in

in my mind ;—and now, would it not be better to make Miss Fairfield acquainted with what has past ?”

Colonel Fairfield could not forbear smiling at Berresford's eagerness, nor could he wonder at his impatience, as he *himself* was almost as anxious to make known to his Lavinia the happiness that awaited her. In answer to the Major's interrogation, he replied—“ I will no longer keep you in suspense, but go in search of Lavinia, and communicate to her the events of the morning ; and I think,” added he, with a smile, “ that she will scarcely be so unfeeling as to doom you to despair.”

Berresford returned the smile, while his face glowed with the delight of anticipation ; yet he still detained the Colonel, as if not perfectly satisfied : after hesitating a moment, he said—“ I should be sorry to owe any thing to the interference of a *third* person.” He paused ; then added, smiling at himself—“ Do you not think it
would.

would be more advisable, that I should myself make known my sentiments to Miss Fairfield?"

The Colonel could not resist laughing at the ingenious manner in which Berresford had proved that an immediate interview with Lavinia was expedient, and he good-humouredly said—"I see your impatience; and as I owe you a long debt of kindness, I will take this opportunity of repaying a small part of it, by allowing you to seek Lavinia yourself; but I must first find out where she is."

On enquiry, he found that Lavinia had quitted the house by a back way, shortly after Major Berresford's arrival, and had directed her steps towards the hanging wood. With this intelligence he returned to Berresford, who entreated the Colonel would permit him to follow her; to which, no objection being made, he took up the letters, and, elate with the most sanguine hope, *almost* unmixed with doubt, he quitted Colonel Fairfield, to proceed on his pursuit.

pursuit. Though neither Lavinia's words or actions had betrayed the secret of her heart, her eyes, ever the mirror of her sensations, had told Berresford that he was not indifferent to her; and *amour propre* : ways makes us the first to observe the most trifling demonstration of partiality for ourselves.

CHAP. IX.

For she was fair
As pictur'd Innocence, and mental grace
Shone in each feature. Soon th'enraptur'd youth
Th' impassion'd secret told !

GISBORNE.

WHEN Lavinia quitted her father, in the utmost surprise and agitation at the unexpected sight of Major Berresford, she retired herself in the library, to endeavour to compose herself; but vain was the attempt, for from this apartment she could plainly distinguish Berresford's voice in the adjoining room. The sound of it went to her soul, and convinced her of the lurking

ing

ing weakness which still lingered in her heart ; she started up, resolved more than ever to avoid even a transient sight of Berresford, and quitting the house by a back way, she flew, scarcely conscious of where she was going, to a favourite seat embosomed in the wood, where she was wont frequently to repair when disposed for solitude.

Having reached this spot, she seated herself on the rustic bench which was placed under the projection of a craggy rock, overhung with wild shrubs. At a short distance, a fall of water, which dashed over the jutting stones which impeded its progress in its descent from the rock, murmured harmoniously, attuning the mind to meditation. Opposite this spot was a vista, which admitted a fine sea prospect, rendered more interesting by a view of the white foam, produced by the constant breaking of the billows against a black rock, which reared its barren head at a short distance from the shore. The brilliant effect

fect of the spray, glittering in the sunbeams, was an object almost too dazzling for the eye to contemplate for any length of time, and caused it to turn, with additional satisfaction, upon the greensward which formed a carpet beneath the feet.

In this romantic spot did Lavinia seat herself, and never before had she been so insensible to the surrounding beauties. To shut out the image of Berresford at this moment, was totally impracticable, and she wearied her imagination in seeking to account for his visit. She was mortified and disappointed at finding herself so much disordered on his account;—she had flattered herself that she should be able to see and hear him, if by accident they should encounter, with perfect indifference; she was distressed to find how sensibly she was affected by his sight; and the pang she endured as his accents struck her ear, convinced her she had not made that progress in dispelling him from her heart, that she had imagined she had.

She

She determined not to return to the house, till she was, from the length of time, convinced of his departure, and fixing her eyes upon the turf at her feet, she continued lost to all outward objects, till the sound of quick approaching steps aroused her, and looking up, she beheld Berresford bounding over the path towards her. He advanced with extended hands, and an air of the most animated joy—"Your father has sent me to seek you!" exclaimed he, in an exulting tone.

Lavinia could not refuse to shake hands with him; and she replied, in a tremulous accent, while the crimson current dyed her cheeks—"I will return immediately—I did not know it was so late."

"Ah!" cried Berresford, in a mortified tone, "you are not glad to see me after so long an absence."

Lavinia could scarcely command her agitation sufficiently to speak, and she just mustered breath to say, with a forced smile—"Not very long."

"Oh

"Oh that you thought it as long as I do!" cried Berresford; "then should I not hesitate to tell you *all* I feel—*all* I have felt since I last saw you ;—but," continued he, a little piqued at her impatience to quit him, "if you will condescend to reseat yourself, and lend me your attention for a few minutes, I might be able to explain the apparent incongruity of my conduct."

Lavinia could not hesitate to comply with his request that she would *reseat* herself, for she felt unable to stand.

Berresford now drew forth the two letters, and presenting them to her, he said— "If you will peruse these, it will render all formal explanations unnecessary ;—and I shall only have to receive my sentence from you," he added, exchanging the air of reserve, for one of his most insinuating glances—*such* a one as converted the roseate tint that was subsiding in Lavinia's cheek, to the less delicate hue of a damask rose. "I will leave you," continued Berresford, "for a few minutes, while you

look over these epistles, but my impatience will not brook a long delay. Be lenient, Lavinia," he added, in the most melting tone, yet with an expression of countenance, which did not agree with the fear his words implied; "be lenient, and remember I have your father's permission to address you thus." With these words he quitted her, and proceeded farther into the wood.

The tumult in Lavinia's breast scarcely permitted her to divine the meaning of the words she surveyed, and frequently was she obliged to reperuse the lines. When she had concluded Berresford's letter to Lady Maria, such a dream of delight took possession of her soul, that she found it impossible, for some minutes, to compose herself sufficiently to attempt reading the answer. The certainty of being beloved by Berresford—ardently, disinterestedly beloved, with the sanction of her father, from which she was assured that no opposition had been offered by Berresford's

ford's family—this delightful certainty took so complete possession of all her faculties, that it was in vain she attempted to comprehend the purport of Lady Maria's letter; not one word could she attend to, and she was still ineffectually endeavouring to collect her thoughts, when Berresford again stood before her. Lavinia's confusion redoubled;—Berresford was now certain that she had read his letter, and knew that she was acquainted with his sentiments; she dared not raise her eyes from Lady Maria's, which she affected to be perusing with the deepest attention.

"Surely," exclaimed Berresford, "you must have concluded—my patience is quite exhausted—at any rate you have read *mine*."

Lavinia coughed, to assure her voice, then said—"I have not yet finished Lady Maria's."

"But you have read *mine*!" repeated Berresford, with emphasis, and gently attempting to take away that she held.

"Oh, pray let me finish it!" cried Lavinia, desirous of any thing which might appear to engross her attention.

"Indeed I cannot permit you to read it all through;—the last page will acquaint you with the purport of the whole, and the rest you can peruse another time." He now pointed out the part he alluded to, and throwing himself on the turf at her feet, he said—"Now I promise not to interrupt you, if you, in return, will not presume too far upon my patience."

Lavinia looked at the lines to no purpose; Berresford was at her feet, his head leaning on his hand, and his eyes fixed on her face. She could not support this, and rising precipitately, she exclaimed—"Indeed, Major Berresford, I shall never be able to read it, if you remain there: pray let me return home; I shall then peruse it with much greater attention."

"No, no!" cried Berresford, impeding her passage, "you shall not quit this spot; but," continued he, playfully hiding his

face in the grass, "I promise not to look at you again, until you have concluded—that is, if I can help it!"

Lavinia reseated herself, and summoning her natural good sense to her aid, she felt ashamed of this apparent trifling, and was apprehensive lest Berresford should impute it to coquetry. The influence of this idea restored her composure sufficiently to enable her to decypher the last page of Lady Maria's letter. Berresford, who, in spite of his promise, was eagerly watching her, instantly perceived when she had concluded, and springing on one knee, he exclaimed, in an impassioned voice—"Now, my Lavinia, it remains with you alone to decide my fate;—say, am I happy or miserable?"

Tumultuous emotions, for a few seconds, rendered Lavinia speechless, when, extending her hand to raise him, she pronounced, in a soft tremulous accent—"For ever will you be happy, if it is in *my* power to make you so!"

H. 3.

Berresford.

Berresford started from the ground, and throwing himself on the seat beside her, he gave vent to the transports of his heart, in language incoherent to all but the sympathizing soul to whom it was addressed—

With downcast eye,*

And burning cheek, she listen'd to his tale,
Own'd the quick pulse that trembled at his heart,
And nam'd it *gratitude*, but felt it *love*.*

Not until the first dinner-bell from the Lodge warned them of the lapse of time, were Lavinia and Berresford aroused from the Elysium they enjoyed. In the meantime, Colonel Fairfield had acquainted Fanny and the young Colebrooks, for he saw no necessity for mystery, with the proposals of Major Berresford. The young people were delighted with the intelligence, and with one accord declared there could not be a more perfect match. Fanny was not surprised at the information, al-

* Gisborne.

though

though she was acquainted with all the circumstances previous to the declaration ; but her sanguine fancy had always predicted that the affair would terminate happily ; for she was convinced Lavinia and Berresford were made for each other, and most thoroughly did she participate in her sister's felicity.

Colebrook could not refrain a sigh, when he reflected how much longer he had sued, yet he was not declared or considered as the future husband of Fanny, who obstinately avoided giving any decided demonstration of reciprocal affection ; and until he was convinced of that, he had too much spirit to solicit her father on the subject.

Miss Colebrook, mild and prepossessing in her manners, interesting though not brilliant, warmly congratulated Colonel Fairfield ; and added, directing a reproachful look towards Fanny—" I am sure Lavinia is too ingenuous to keep the Major in a moment's suspense—her compas-

sionate nature will never delight in displaying her power."

Fanny reddened, and Colebrook looked angrily at his sister. Colonel Fairfield could not forbear laughing at the hint conveyed by these words to Fanny ; indeed, he was so much disposed to be pleased, that few things, at this moment, could have discomposed him.

In this enviable temper of mind was he standing at the window, when he perceived Lavinia and Berresford approaching. Oh, with what exultation did he look on his child ! that creature formed by *his* precepts—*his* instruction ; and by *his* tender solicitude and foresight, completed such as she was—a being every way calculated to inspire the most animated attachment in the noble breast of *that* man, who, of all others, he thought most worthy of the darling of his heart ! As they advanced still nearer, Colonel Fairfield traced, with the most sympathetic sensation, the lineaments
of

of unalloyed felicity displayed in their expressive features; his heart dilated with responsive joy, and he could no longer repel the tears of delight which sprung to his eyes; unnoticed by all, he hastily brushed them from his cheek, ashamed of what he conceived to be a weakness, but what every affectionate, fond, and exulting parent will, I doubt not, acknowledge to be a natural and uncontrollable sensation.

In the hall, the Colonel met his Lavinia and her lover. His feelings were too tumultuous to permit him formally to join their hands, and composedly invoke blessings on their heads, but catching his child to his breast, the ardent pressure that he gave her, spoke more than volumes; and the eager grasp with which he seized the hand of Berresford, fully evinced the emotion, which was unspeakable.

Lavinia eagerly availed herself of the excuse of retiring, in order to alter her dress for dinner. The Colonel attended Berresford to his dressing-room, telling

H. 5.

him

him that he should order an apartment to be allotted entirely to him, that, in future, he was to consider as his own; so that when the weather, or any other cause, might render it inconvenient for him to return to L——, it would always be ready for his reception. Berresford was all joy and gratitude; and it would have been difficult to have determined which of the two was most to be envied.

The tumult of Lavinia's mind made her almost incapable of performing the duties of the toilette; fortunately her *femme de chambre* was near to assist her; it was rarely she permitted her attendance, except on particular occasions, but on this day, she found it absolutely necessary, for she could not collect her thoughts sufficiently to enable her to find a single article of dress.

I will not weary the reader with an elaborate account of the subsequent part of this happy day, which, though indelibly impressed on the minds of the parties concerned, would

would probably be found monotonous in the description. At a late hour Berresford took his leave, with a promise to be at Fairfield as soon as his military duty would permit, on the morrow. How different were his feelings now, to what they had been the last time he had traversed that road on quitting Fairfield, smarting with the sting of unmerited suspicion!

It may perhaps be subject of surprise to the reader, why Major Berresford should feel so excessively hurt by Colonel Fairfield's conduct, and why he did not, as he had it in his power, explain himself at once, and by that means completely clear himself from all imputations?—And yet, in a tender susceptible mind, I can scarce conceive it possible this could excite wonder. What can distress us more, than to perceive that we are suspected of weakness and instability, when we are sensible that the strictest rectitude and propriety guides our conduct? Major Berresford was the soul of honour; he had the highest opi-

nion of Colonel Fairfield, which he conceived to be mutual; and nothing could have astonished him more, than that the Colonel should, for a moment, doubt the motives of his behaviour towards Lavinia. At the instant he became conscious he was suspected, his indignation was too powerful to allow him to reflect coolly; and though he *could*, had he chosen it, have exonerated himself at once, yet he would not condescend to enter into any explanations, so completely was he mortified by the imputation of inconsiderate vanity, which he conceived cast upon him, by the suspicions of Colonel Fairfield. He instantly resolved on quitting the house, and never more entering it, unless he could bring with him indisputable evidence of his motive for action.—“For,” thought he, in the warmth of the moment, “if Colonel Fairfield can conceive me capable of presuming to particularize his daughter, merely to gratify my vanity, and of openly attaching myself to her, in or-

der to deceive, and make her appear ridiculous, if he can suspect me of such unpardonable duplicity, he might, with equal justice, doubt whatever I should advance in my justification;—and were I to tell him I was certain of my aunt's approbation, he might suppose it was a fabrication of my own, to induce him, by pacifying him, to allow a continuation of my visits.—No, no ! I will not leave room for doubt.”

Under the influence of these ideas, he reached his lodgings, and immediately addressed Lady Maria Courtney, and dispatched the letter that night. The time which intervened before the answer arrived, he passed almost entirely alone, avoiding dining at the mess, under pretence of indisposition ; and denying himself to most of those who came to visit him, for he found himself incapacitated for society. During this period he became less indignant ; he recollected, among other things, that Colonel Howard was acquainted with the circumstance of Lady Amelia's predilection,

predilection, and must naturally have concluded from that, that his aunt would not favour his pretensions to Miss Fairfield; this, he conjectured, Colonel Howard had related to Colonel Fairfield, and he began to think the latter rather less blamable. On the receipt of Lady Maria's letter, he set out for Fairfield. Never before had he been so unmerciful to his horse, as he was the first three miles of the road—his servant was completely distanced; but when he got within a mile of the house, he suddenly drew up, and ineffectually endeavoured to compose himself—each moment increased his agitation, and he was double the time in getting over the last mile, to what he had performed the three first in. What followed on his arrival at Fairfield, has already been related—his feelings on quitting it, amply compensated for all his past uneasiness. He threw the reins on his horse's neck, and recapitulated, again and again, all the events of the preceding day; not a word, not a look of his Lavinia's.

nia's, was forgotten; and he proceeded, totally insensible to surrounding objects, until the full stop his horse mechanically made at the door of his lodgings, aroused him from his dream of bliss. On entering his room, instead of retiring to rest, he sat down to acquaint Lady Maria Courtney of all that had passed; and to beg that she and his father, as they had promised, would immediately write to Colonel Fairfield; and he warmly entreated her to prevail on the Colonel to use *his* influence with his daughter, to induce her to name, or allow him to name, an early period for the completion of his happiness.

On this night, visions of delight chased sleep from the senses of Lavinia. She was now at liberty to suffer her mind to pursue its natural bias; the painful task of constantly battling between reason and inclination, was now at an end;—she felt as if her imagination, which had long been confined an obstreperous prisoner within the narrow limits of prudence, was suddenly emancipated,

emancipated, and permitted to range at large and without controul, over all the flowery fields of Elysium !

CHAP. X.

Pleasure now resumes her sway,
 Summer's sun unclouded shines,
 Festive mirth attunes the lay,
 And the heart to joy inclines.

E. P.

HAPPINESS now reigned triumphant at Fairfield Lodge. Berresford was a constant attendant at the breakfast-table. It was his custom to exercise the regiment, which he

* All the mottos, having the initials E. P. subjoined, are also the productions of the Author of "*A Soldier's Offspring.*"

commanded.

commanded in Colonel Howard's absence, generally three times a-week, and after accompanying them to the field, he would, at the conclusion of the business, constantly repair to Fairfield, and he never left it until a late hour.

In a few days Colonel Fairfield received letters from the Honourable Mr. Berresford and Lady Maria Courtney, every way satisfactory; and both expressed an ardent desire that the marriage should take place as soon as possible. Lady Maria entered very minutely into every pecuniary arrangement, and declared it her intention to relinquish the half of her possession to her nephew Edward, on his wedding-day; the remainder he was to possess at her demise. Many other particulars were stated, which it is unnecessary here to insert; suffice it to say, that her conduct was disinterested and liberal to excess.

Colonel Fairfield acquainted Lavinia and Berresford with the purport of these letters;

this moment, completely dependant upon you. You do indeed wrong me, when you accuse me of mistrusting you; I would not forgive you, but that I am certain you do not think so."

"Then why not, Lavinia, convince me at once of your confidence in me, by complying with my wishes? You know how very uncertain is the fate of a soldier.—Good God! a thousand things might occur, which we little dream of, to prevent the fruition of our desires. Oh, Lavinia, this is the first time we have ever differed, even upon the *smallest* point; and now only in support of a mere prejudice, you *will* persist in your resolution!"

"If you can only convince me that it is a *mere prejudice*, you have conquered; but hitherto you have said nothing to prove it to be such;—but so far I will compromise with you, that if any thing of moment occurs to render an immediate union necessary, I will not hesitate an instant, but setting

“Setting aside all fortuitous circumstances, I will be yours at the termination of six months from our first acquaintance.”

“*Six months!*” ejaculated Berresford, “you may as well say *six years* at once;—you never can be serious!”

“Indeed I am—but I tell you *again*, should your regiment be ordered abroad, on a station where they might probably remain some years, or any other event render an abridgement of the time expedient, I will immediately comply with your wishes.”

Lavinia was positive, and Berresford was obliged to submit, which he did with a better grace, flattering himself that he should be able to invent some plea to oblige her to alter her determination. He endeavoured to persuade Colonel Fairfield to interfere for him, but in vain, for the Colonel rather approved of Lavinia's resolve.

“And why,” said he, “do you wish to curtail the happy days you now enjoy?”

You

She found her imagination wholly averse, and indeed incapable of profound thought on inanimate subjects at this time; Berresford occupied all her ideas; and if ever a reflection occurred independant of him, it would invariably terminate in what he would think, say, or feel on the subject.

Three months passed away, during which time, the harmony of the Fairfield party was without interruption, except by occasional *fracas* between Fanny and Colebrook, the discomfiture of whose looks always betrayed to the surrounding observers when they were displeased with each other. Colebrook had repeatedly assured Fanny, by a thousand modes and incontestable proofs, of the sincerity of his affections; but she never would give him a serious answer, and constantly affected to treat as a jest, what she very well knew to be quite the reverse. Lavinia often conversed with her sister on the subject, but not even to her would Fanny confess that she had any predilection in favour of Colebrook; but La-

vinia

vinia had too much penetration to be deceived, and frequently represented to her the absurdity of her conduct, saying—"If you have no preference for Francis, why do you not tell him so at once, and not continue to trifle with him as you do? It is very obvious that you are never easy, when his attention is, for a moment, distracted from you; and yet you pretend you do not wish for it. Come, come, Fanny, be candid, and either acknowledge to Francis that you love him, or give over the foolish habit of endeavouring to monopolize all his notice. He undoubtedly has a right to imagine you prefer him; and if you do *not*, I really think your behaviour unjustifiable."

Fanny looked very silly, and reddened; but she was ever open to conviction, particularly from the lips of Lavinia; and after hesitating a minute, she said, confusedly—"I am sure I do not mean to treat Francis ill, but—but—you know he always will take in earnest what I mean only in

fun ;—indeed it is all his own fault, he is so easily offended ;—now you are so fortunate, Lavinia, Berresford is never angry with you.”

Fanny here ingeniously contrived to wave the subject, by endeavouring to start one which she well knew was sufficiently interesting to Lavinia to make her forget all others. Lavinia replied—“ It is impossible Berresford can be angry with me, when I never do any thing to offend him ; but I am sure, were I to do half as much to provoke him, as you do to Francis, he would leave me, without hesitation, to myself, until I had found my senses.”

Fanny had nothing more to say, and the conversation was dropped for that time. For a few days subsequent, she conducted herself with tolerable consistency towards Colebrook ; but she soon relapsed, and he was too much her slave, to make a single struggle against her despotism. Had he possessed but sufficient resolution to retaliate upon her, by feigning indifference, it
is

is more than probable he would have brought her to reason ; but while she was convinced of the absolute dominion she had over him, she believed she might amuse herself at his expence with impunity. Unacquainted with human nature, from want of reflection, and blinded by vanity, not, for one moment, did she believe it *possible* that he could ever prove refractory ; nor did she foresee that a constant repetition of teizing and contradiction, would, in time, estrange his affections from her ; and although this had been repeatedly represented to her by her sister, she persisted in persuading herself, that it was merely the language of prudence and over caution, originating in a distrust of the power, she felt confident, she possessed over Colebrook ; and she conceived it was quite indulgence enough, if, from time to time, she condescended to smile upon him.

Colonel Fairfield was resolved not to interfere in the business ;—not but he greatly condemned Fanny's conduct, which he

really thought merited the punishment he believed it probable it might draw upon her, and for which reason he determined to let her take her own way, as the most effectual method of curing her of her folly. He suspected that Colebrook would, at length, be worn out by her caprice, and perhaps be induced to pay his *dévotins* where they appeared more acceptable ; and the mortification this would prove to Fanny, he believed, would, in its effects, be truly salutary ; and tend more towards convincing her of the impropriety of her behaviour, than all the rhetoric he could have exerted on the subject. He was much hurt to see the son of his dearest friend, distressed and made unhappy by a member of his family ; and one too, whose nature, excepting in this instance, was candid and humane in the extreme ;—for Fanny had a most tender heart, and was ever ready to alleviate the most trifling sufferings of her fellow-creatures ; but in respect to her lover, she seemed perfectly obdurate,

obdurate, always laughing at the idea of his uneasiness. It was *here* only that Colonel Fairfield beheld any thing to blame in his youngest daughter; and he really wished that the offence might bring with it its merited correction.

It was now the beginning of October, and the variegated tints of a tumn, and unusual severity of the weather, promised a premature winter. The delightful excursions which it was the custom of the Fairfield party to make to the New Forest, and there, under the shelter of the trees, partake of a cold dinner, were now obliged to be relinquished. Mr. and Mrs. Williams, who I have neglected to mention for some time, frequently increased the harmony of the recreation, by their company; most sincerely did these worthy people participate with their friends, on the happy circumstance which had opened such splendid prospects to Lavinia.

Berresford had repeatedly endeavoured, upon a thousand frivolous pretexts, to persuade

suade Lavinia there was an absolute necessity for their immediate union; but as there was, in reality, no ostensible reason for the changing her resolution, she continued inflexible.

Another month flew imperceptibly away, and dark gloomy days, and heavy rain, often accompanied with sleet, ushered in the awful month, supposed, by our Gallic neighbours, to prove fatal to so many Englishmen, when Spleen assumes her empire over the desponding imagination, and debilitates the better reason by her enervating power. Yet *few*, I trust, be the victims sacrificed to its influence; and if, in reality, our climate is, at one period of the year, unfavourable to promoting a contented disposition in those who are glad of an excuse for giving vent to dissatisfied murmuring, yet have we no reason to complain, when every day discovers that our atmosphere is particularly propitious to the cultivation of the highest talents, and most exalted virtues; and the innumerable

merable advantages we enjoy in other respects, in this land of freedom and prosperity, most amply compensates for any imaginary disadvantages we may be supposed to labour under, by those who envy our happy state !

Thrice happy land ! where he who flies
From the dark ills of other skies,
From scorn or want's unerring woes,
May shelter him in proud repose ;
Hope sings along the yellow sand,
His welcome to a patriot land ;
The mighty wood with pomp receives
The stranger in its world of leaves,
Which soon their barren glories yield
To the warm shed and cultur'd field ;
And he who came of all bereft,
To whom malignant fate had left
Nor home, nor friends, nor country dear,
Finds home, and friends, and country here*.

* Thomas Moore.

CHAP. XI.

“What time November stings the flow'ry field,
And bids the earth her verdant cov'ring yield
To hoary frost ; when trees dishonour'd stand,
And birds in clusters seek a foreign land,
His friends he left.”

It was on the second day of November, that Lavinia, according to custom, for she always rose early, was seated before the library fire, with her feet on the fender, and a book in her hand ; whether she was reading or not, I cannot pretend to say, but as her marriage was fixed to take place on the twelfth of that month, it is most probable she was, in some measure, abstracted

strated from the subject before her. 'he did not expect Berresford before twelve o'clock, as he had told her the preceding night, that some military duty would prevent his being with her by breakfast-time, as had been his constant custom, since the field-days had been over, which the badness of the weather had put an end to, for some time. Berresford frequently slept at Fairfield, but the before-mentioned duty had obliged him to return to L——, the night before.

Colonel Fairfield was also an early riser; he was just issuing from the house, to take a walk round his grounds, it being a fine frosty morning, when he was surprised by the sight of Major Berresford, who precipitately throwing himself from his horse, entered the hall, and instead of greeting the Colonel in his customary polite and friendly manner, he grasped the hand extended to welcome him with a convulsive pressure, and exclaimed, in an agitated tone—"Where is Lavinia?"

The

The Colonel was greatly alarmed by Berresford's disturbed appearance, and with an apprehensive look, he said—"I hope nothing disagreeable has happened?"

"Oh, nothing but what might naturally have been expected!" returned Berresford, in a melancholy voice. "I found, on reaching L—— last night, that the regiment had received orders to embark without loss of time:—but, oh! tell me where is Lavinia? for I *must* be the first to communicate these wretched tidings."

"She is in the library," replied the Colonel; and turning away, he entered the breakfast-parlour, where he remained, with his eyes fixed on the fire, revolving in his mind, the probable consequences of the disagreeable intelligence he had just received.

Berresford proceeded to the library, and bursting open the door, he advanced towards Lavinia; she started from her seat to receive him, and was about to express her pleasure at his unexpected appearance,
when

when the expression she beheld depicted on his speaking countenance, struck her dumb. She regarded him with the most enquiring look of eager apprehension. He pressed the hands which he held, with ardour to his lips, and leading her to a sofa, he threw himself beside her, and, for a few seconds, seemed incapable of disclosing what he was sensible would at once dash the cup of felicity from her lips.— At length he exclaimed, in a low tone—
“ We are going, Lavinia !”

“ Going !” repeated she, with quickness;
“ Oh, Heaven, where ?”

“ God only knows,” replied Berresford, in a desponding voice. “ On my return, last night, to L——, I met an orderly dragoon coming here to seek me. I immediately repaired to Colonel Howard, who had sent him, and found that he had just received the orders, by an estafette from the general of the district, for the regiment to embark directly, to join the expedition now lying at Spithead. Some trans-

ports anchored off L—— yesterday morning, and there was a report, which I then fondly imagined was a vague one, that they were destined to receive *us* ; but, alas ! it is too true !” He paused a moment, then added, in an accent of despair—“ We are to embark at twelve o’clock *this* day !”

At the concluding words, Lavinia raised her eyes, which had been fixed on the ground during the preceding part of the communication, and gazed, with an expression of anguish and amazement, on the face of Berresford. He clasped her to his aching heart, while the big tears, which sprung uncontrollable to his eyes, fell on her cheek. Lavinia remained silent for some minutes—she wept not, but seemed buried in thought, as if endeavouring to accommodate her understanding to what she had heard, and yet almost doubting the possibility of the sudden reverse in her fate—she could scarcely comprehend the extent of her misery ;—at length, after a deep-drawn sigh, she exclaimed—“ V

might you reproach me, for having so obstinately refused, long ere this, to become indissolubly yours. Oh! what an aggravation is this idea to my present wretchedness! Had I complied with your wishes, I should *now* have had a *right* to follow you, wheresoever you went; and have been ever near you, to watch over you in the dreadful perils you are about to encounter." Her voice faltered, and she could proceed no further; as the direful idea presented itself, of his being wounded, or perhaps dying, in a foreign land; she was completely overcome, and covering her face with her hands, she burst into an agony of tears.

When Berresford could command his voice sufficiently to speak, he said—
"Think not, my dearest love, that had you been my wife, I would have been so unpardonably selfish, as to allow you to share the dangers and hardships I must necessarily be exposed to—No, my Lavinia! for the first time I thank you for having refused

fused to comply with my request; for dreadful as our separation *now* must be, I can bear it better than I could, were you my wife."

"Were I indeed your wife," returned Lavinia, "no consideration should ever induce me to quit you, but the most dire necessity. It has ever been my opinion, that when a union has once taken place, even a temporary separation of the parties had better, if possible, be avoided. Long absences are generally found to alienate the affection: but not from these motives would I follow thee, my best beloved—never could I harbour a suspicion of your constancy—but from *inclination*, to escape the agony I must endure at the loss of your society.—Ah! I know not what I say!—Had I been thine, I must have left my father, my dear Fanny—yes, every way I must be miserable!" Lavinia's words became inarticulate, and again she yielded to the conviction of her distress.

Half-an-hour elapsed before either could regain

regain sufficient composure to enable them to join the rest of the family. They found the Colonel and Fanny seated at the breakfast-table, sipping their tea, but the eatables remained untouched. Colonel Fairfield anxiously enquired of Berresford, if he had any idea of the destination of the regiment?—to which he replied—“We are to join the expedition; and I understand it is to sail under sealed orders to a certain latitude.—But I should imagine,” added he, wishing to make it appear in the best light, “that we shall not be long absent; I rather think it is intended to attack some port on the opposite coast.”

Colonel Fairfield shook his head, but made no answer: he knew this was not Berresford's real opinion, as he saw no foundation whatever for such a supposition. He enquired into further particulars, and was rather pleased to find, that the regiment was to embark that day, as he rightly judged, that if they *must* go, the sooner it was over the better; as the longer

ger an inevitable separation is deferred, the more dreadful is the moment of parting. Had they been delayed but a few days, the Colonel thought it more than probable Lavinia herself would have determined on giving her hand at once to Berresford, and accompanying him abroad, as he well knew her opinion of conjugal duty and attachment: but the shortness of the time rendered every idea of adopting such a plan impossible; and he felt a degree of consolation, when he considered he should still enjoy the society of his dearest child, and hoped his tender attention and solicitude would alleviate, in some measure, the anxiety she must inevitably experience.

Silent and pale did Lavinia continue at the breakfast-table. An oppressive heaviness in her throat, prevented the possibility of partaking of the meal; she dared not trust her voice, for had she attempted to speak, the ready tears would have instantly forced their passage from her full eyes. Fanny had never felt so much in her life

as she now did ; and she gazed on her sister with streaming sorrow, unconscious that this sympathy in her sensations rendered them still more acute and difficult to be controuled.

Berresford was obliged to be present at the embarkation of the regiment ; but as it was impossible they could sail before daylight the next morning, he promised to return to Fairfield to dine, and remain there till the last moment. The instant Berresford turned his back on Fairfield, Lavinia flew to her chamber, and, for a short time, gave way to all the weakness of human nature ; but her better reason soon gained the ascendancy, and though no possible argument could, for a moment, reconcile her to the idea of parting with Berresford, yet she soon became sensible of the irrationality of yielding to this overwhelming agony ; and she resolved, whatever her internal emotion might be, to endeavour, all in her power, to conceal their effects. In pursuance of this laudable resolution, she
opened

opened her chamber door to admit her sister, who had made many ineffectual attempts to gain admission. The moment Fanny entered, she threw her arms around her sister, and deluged her with tears. This was not the way to encourage poor Lavinia's fluctuating fortitude; but she made one great effort, and entreated Fanny to have compassion on her, and not increase her distress by her tender sympathy; and passing her arm through her's, she descended the stairs, and they joined their father.

He was much pleased, though not surprised, to perceive that Lavinia had regained some degree of composure. He did not even take her hand at her entrance, or in any way appear to notice her dejection, for he well knew that the slightest circumstance, at a moment like this, is sufficient to upset all one's stock of assumed calmness. He gradually entered upon the subject which engrossed all their thoughts, and talked as if he considered it as nothing

so very terrible ; observing, that whoever was destined for a soldier's wife, must be liable to all such adventitious occurrences, and sooner or later they must be inured to it. Lavinia faintly smiled ; and the Colonel perceiving young Colebrook and his sister approaching the house, he went out to meet them, and acquaint them with what had happened.

The morning was passed most uncomfortably by all parties ; Lavinia vainly endeavouring to retain an apparent calmness, which more than once forsook her, as some tender idea occurred ; and the remainder of the group forcing a constrained conversation, in hopes of dissipating, in some measure, her anxiety.

The Colebrooks left them before dinner, as they conceived their presence would only be a restraint at the present juncture. They were scarcely gone, when Lavinia beheld Berresford riding up the avenue. Instead of the beautiful high-mettled charger which was wont to bear him, he rode a miserable

miserable lean hack horse, by which Lavinia concluded that his own was already embarked. Even this circumstance, trifling in itself, renewed, with added strength, her sorrow. Thus it ever is! Although we are *convinced* of the certainty of the evil that we dread, yet the most insignificant change which denotes a *preparation* for it, never fails to excite additional anguish.

"Oh! my Edward—beloved of my soul!" she inwardly ejaculated, "when, when shall I again see you approaching? To-morrow, at this time, were I to give words, I could not behold you—I could not hear your voice! You will be far, far away; and each dreadful moment will transport you farther from me, till oceans roll between us."

She shuddered with horror at this wretched thought; and when Berresford entered the room, it was with tears only she could reply to his tender and endearing expressions.

"I shall leave my dog with you, my love."

love," said Berresford; "I think he will not be an unwelcome inmate here."

Lavinia gently pressed the hand which held her's, but dared not trust her voice. The dog was a beautiful spaniel, which; from the notice Lavinia had always taken of it, had become nearly as much attached to her as to his master.

The remainder of the day was past in a way which will easily be imagined by all those who have ever been in a similar situation; and surely there is scarcely an individual, who, at some period of their lives, has not experienced the chilling and desolate sensation of parting with those we love best. True, we do not all suffer to the same degree; and some there are, who will probably think a minute detail of a parting scene extremely wearisome, and may even condemn what has already been described, as unnatural and overstrained.

Damnanti quod non intelligunt.*

If *such* there are, I beg leave to congratulate

* Cicero.

late

late them on being blessed so far above the ordinary race of mortals, as to be exempt from all those wretched emotions which affect the heart, when contemplating a beloved object for the *last* time.

Major Berresford was commissioned by Colonel Howard to make his apologies to the Fairfield family, for not calling to bid them farewell; but the precipitation with which he was obliged to act, rendered it impossible. Berresford had left the regiment all embarked, with the exception of some of the officers, who were expediting the arrangement of the affairs which still detained them on shore, as the signal for all hands to repair on board was flying, and orders were given for weighing anchor at day-break to join the convoy at Spit-head, which was only detained by a foul wind. Berresford bespoke some sailors, with a boat, to be in readiness to convey him on board, the moment he returned to L——; and he appointed them to wait at a public-house on the quay, where he could

could be certain of finding them, at whatever hour it might be.

Colonel Fairfield asked Berresford what he had done with his horses, as he supposed he would not be allowed to take them?—to which he replied, that he had always promised his eldest brother, that he would send his favourite charger to him, if ever he should be obliged to part with it; and he had accordingly entrusted him to the care of a man who had been recommended to him at L——, who had that morning set out with the horse for Mr. Berresford's estate in Surry, where the family then was. His second horse he had disposed of to a gentleman in L——, who had long wished for it.

After dinner Berresford wrote a few hasty lines to his aunt, informing her of what had happened, and promising to send her a long letter, from the first port with which they should have communication. What a stroke to poor Lady Maria! who
was

was to have been at Fairfield in a few days, to be present at the most joyful event.

Berresford devoted the rest of the short time he had to remain, to conversing with his Lavinia, and making a thousand trifling arrangements concerning the occupations which she was to pursue in his absence, in order to cheat the weary hours of some of their tediousness. Berresford promised always to have letters ready to send by every opportunity which might occur, and he flattered Lavinia with hopes that she should frequently hear from him. Berresford had, for some time, been possessed of Lavinia's miniature likeness, and in this he placed his chief hope for consolation in her absence.

The cloth was no sooner withdrawn after supper, than Fanny took an opportunity to steal quietly out of the room, for she could not bear to be present when Berresford was taking his final leave. Quick flew the precious moments—still

Berresford

Berresford made no effort to be gone—still he fancied he had a thousand things to say, and yet could not call to mind what he had left unsaid.

At length the clock struck one! Lavinia started, and, with a fearful tremor, pressed the hand which held her's. Colonel Fairfield looked anxiously towards them, and Berresford half rose from the sofa, but again fell back, and put his hands across his eyes.

The Colonel now rose, and advancing to Berresford, he said—"My dear Berresford, do not prolong this sad moment;—pity our Lavinia, and do not aggravate her present sufferings by a sight of your distress—I will go and order your horse out."

With these words he left the room. Lavinia suddenly bent forward, and looked after him as if she would have called him back, but recollecting herself, she suffered him to proceed; and the momentary flush which had suffused her cheek, was succeed-

ed by a death-like paleness. Colonel Fairfield remained absent but a few minutes, during which both were too much affected to speak, and when he joined them, they all continued silent. When the sound of the horse's feet struck on the expecting ear of Lavinia, she involuntarily grasped the arm of Berresford, as if she would have *forcibly* detained him, when making a violent struggle to recall her wonted firmness, she suddenly relinquished her hold, and exclaimed, in a choked and under voice—"Go!"

Berresford clasped her to his bursting heart, nor could he tear himself from her, until the Colonel, taking him by the arm, said, in a firm and resolute tone—

"Come, come, Berresford, this must not be—you must not torture her thus!"

Berresford started up, and, without once more daring to look at Lavinia, rushed out of the room. The Colonel followed him, and saw him mount his horse—Berresford
grasped

grasped his extended hand, when suddenly dropping it, he put spurs to his horse, and disappeared.

The Colonel immediately returned to Lavinia. The instant she had lost sight of Berresford, she threw herself on the place he had quitted, and deluged it with her tears. Fanny, who had been awaiting this trying moment in an adjoining apartment, flew to her beloved sister, as soon as she was assured of Berresford's departure, and was weeping over her, when her father re-entered. The Colonel did not attempt to interrupt them. He knew that nature would predominate for a short time, but he also knew that his Lavinia would not long allow her feelings to overwhelm her *thus*. As he had judged, many minutes had not elapsed when she suddenly raised herself, and vainly endeavouring to dry her eyes, she said, in a half whisper — "I will go to bed," and quitting the apartment, she proceeded, with uneven steps, to her chamber. Her father and sister both followed her up stairs, the latter

x 2 entreating

entreating that she would permit her to share her couch, for she could not bear to leave her alone in her present state of mind—Lavinia tacitly consented. The Colonel affectionately embraced them both, and knowing that *time* only could restore their accustomed composure, he left them, to seek in vain for that repose, which the distressing agitation of his spirits for this night deprived him of.

The sisters, silently and in tears, retired to bed, but not to *rest*, for sleep refused, even for one moment, to obliterate from the mind of Lavinia the consciousness of her wretchedness; and her deep and revolving sighs pierced too deeply the affectionate heart of her sister, to allow her to enjoy the sweets of oblivion.

This sudden reverse in Lavinia's fate required the exertion of all her fortitude, to enable her to bear it like a rational creature. This was no common separation. There was no fixed period to which she could look forward to a reunion with
the

the object of her tenderest solicitude. He might be absent for months, without her knowing where he was, or even whether he was in existence—he must inevitably be exposed to complicated dangers—he would have to encounter the ungovernable fury of the elements, at the most inclement season of the year—he would, in all probability, have to contend with a desperate and inveterate enemy; and should he escape these perils, the malignancy of an inauspicious climate might, after all, prove fatal to him. Such were the desponding reflections which revolved again and again to the afflicted mind of Lavinia.

Berresford had promised, that if detained only a few hours at Spithead, he would, if possible, send a letter on shore, which would be forwarded to her, and to this she looked forward as a ray of consolation.

CHAP. XII.

The night has been unruly : where we lay,
The chimnies were blown down, and, as they say,
Lamentings heard i' th' air ; strange screams of death ;
And prophecying with accents terrible,
Of dire combustion and confus'd events,
New hatch'd to the woeful time :
The obscure bird clamour'd the live-long night—
Some say the earth was fev'rous and did shake !

SHAKESPEARE.

WITH the dawn of day Colonel Fairfield
quitted his uneasy couch ; he immediately
ascertained the direction of the wind, and
he found it was quite fair for the sailing of
the convoy ; and as it continued so the
whole

whole day, he gave up all hopes of hearing from Berresford from Spithead.

Heavily wore the hours of this day to both the sisters. Lavinia could not yet regain sufficient composure to pursue her usual judicious occupations;—she nevertheless made the attempt, but every object she cast her eyes upon, recalled so forcibly the image of Berresford, that it required her utmost resolution to repel her emotion. She had a little stool she was accustomed to put her feet upon; Berresford had frequently seated himself on it, and used to call it his *throne*, in allusion to its being placed at *her* feet;—this object, trifling in itself, she could not contemplate, but with the most acute anguish; she fancied she could behold Berresford—that she could even hear his accents; and she was forced at length, to rise and conceal it from her view. She was vexed with herself for this weakness, particularly when she found that almost every thing which caught her eyes, excited some tender idea connected with

him who had so lately been her almost constant companion.

The Colebrooks called in the course of the morning, and warmly pressed the Colonel and his daughters to come and stay, for some time, at the Hall; for these kind friends justly concluded that a change of scene would be the best restorative of cheerfulness. The Colonel accepted, with pleasure, this invitation, but delayed availing himself of it for a few days, for he feelingly imagined that his Lavinia would be unfit for society, until she had regained a sufficient degree of self-command to conceal the deep dejection which at present hung on her spirits. It was therefore agreed, that at the end of four days, the Fairfields should repair to the Hall.

An additional weight fell on Lavinia's heart, when she found that she could not reasonably expect to hear from Berresford. In the course of the succeeding day, Colonel Fairfield repaired to L——, hoping to gain some intelligence respecting the sailing

ing of the fleet; and he was informed by a person who had left Portsmouth the night before, that the whole of the convoy had weighed anchor at two o'clock in the afternoon, and that as they were getting under weigh, they had been joined by the transports from L——, having on board the —— regiment;—the whole of the fleet was out of sight before night-fall.

With this information the Colonel returned home, and was happy to perceive that Lavinia seemed rather satisfied than pained by the communication. She now resolutely pursued her accustomed avocations, and determined on subduing, as much as possible, all those enervating ideas which so considerably aggravate our sufferings; and in support of this wise resolution, she kept every moment of her time employed. The dog Fido was her constant companion, and on him she lavished more caresses and greater fondness, than she would have thought strictly justifiable.

to one of the brute creation, had he belonged to any other than Berresford.

On the evening previous to the day on which they were to repair to Colebrook Hall, the feelings of the Fairfield family, and particularly Lavinia, were most unpleasantly disturbed. During the whole day, the weather had been gloomy—the clouds heavy; and frequent and violent showers, accompanied with hail, gave promise of a dreary night. Towards evening the wind rose almost to a hurricane—it moaned through the firs and other evergreens which rose round Fairfield Lodge. The rain beat against the windows, and the encreasing roaring of the blast might justly be compared to the howling of innumerable demons, who were plotting the destruction of the helpless beings who were so unfortunate as to be exposed to the merciless storm.

The Colonel and his daughters were in the library, where they had passed their
evenings

evenings since Berresford's departure ; it was a warm, comfortable room ; and from being surrounded by books, and filled with various objects formed to improve the mind, it appeared smaller and more congenial to the inclinations of the little party which occupied it. The girls were at work, and the Colonel was endeavouring to amuse them by reading aloud ; but the violence of the tempest encreased to such a degree, that his voice was totally drowned—every thing in the house seemed to crack. The same ideas were passing in the mind of each individual, yet neither dared venture to express them. The Colonel continued to read, though he knew not the sense of one word that he uttered—the sisters, with trembling fingers, pursued their work—involuntary and deep sighs burst from the bosom of the wretched Lavinia, nor could she forbear starting, when the gusts of wind howled with augmented force.—A shudder of horror ran through her frame—she laid down her

work, and rising from her seat, she paced the apartment with quick and agitated steps, from time to time clasping her hands together with uncontrollable emotion:—Fanny also rose, and followed her sister with the most anxious looks of solicitude:—the Colonel laid aside his book, but remained silent—he could find no language applicable to the moment; he could not assure Lavinia her fears were groundless, at the very time when reason itself must convince her that such a tempest was enough to overwhelm the stoutest vessel.

The breaking of the billows could plainly be distinguished, dashing, with irresistible force, against the craggy rocks and shore. The Colonel advanced towards Lavinia; he took her hand, and tenderly pressing it, said—“My child—my dearest Lavinia! for God’s sake—” He paused, not knowing what to say—to tell her to be calm, was ridiculous, for he was sensible that she was exerting her utmost strength of mind to retain the little com-
3 posture

posure she still possessed: at length he continued—"We are particularly exposed to the wind when it blows from its present quarter; and from the number of trees which surround us, it sounds much worse than it is in reality. I think it is not now quite so violent—it certainly begins to abate."

He had scarcely concluded these words, when a frightful burst of wind seemed to shake the whole building to its foundation, and a horrible crash was instantaneously followed by the flying open of the library door. An electric shock appeared to strike the sisters—Fanny screamed, and flew behind her father, hiding her eyes—Lavinia remained rooted to the spot where she stood, with her eyes rivetted on the open door, while an expression of terrific horror overspread her pallid countenance. Colonel Fairfield immediately proceeded to enquire into the cause of alarm: Fanny followed him close behind. On entering the hall, they found that the wind had

burst

burst open the back door, and caused the destruction of some flower-pots, which stood near it; the sudden entrance of the storm had produced the opening of the library door, as well as of all those which communicated with the hall. The subject of terror being thus simply explained, the Colonel ordered the back door to be secured, as usual, with locks, bolts, and bars; and having reprimanded the servants for neglecting to do so before, he returned to the library, still followed by Fanny.

They found Lavinia precisely in the same attitude in which they had left her, but the horror-struck expression of her features had given place to a look of melancholy despondency. So completely had her mind been appalled by the dreadful images which presented themselves, as she reflected on the terrible consequences which the tempest, in all human probability, would produce, that when the door flew open, her disordered imagination almost

most persuaded her to expect she should see the pale ghostly figure of Berresford, such as she pictured him, buffeting with the pitiless waves, and straining every nerve to preserve that precious life, so inexpressibly dear to her. On these melancholy contemplations were her thoughts fixed, when her father and sister re-entered the apartment: she heard not the explanation the Colonel gave of the recent alarm, but remained lost in the deepest dejection.

The storm from this time gradually abated, and seemed as if it had spent all its force; but the roaring of the sea still continued, and bore testimony that the ocean's rage was not yet appeased.

The hour of repose arrived, and the family retired; Fanny still shared her sister's bed, and endeavoured to persuade her, that, as the wind was lulled, there was no further cause for apprehension. Lavinia answered only by a melancholy shake of
of.

of her head; and the only words she spoke that night, was an answer to her father's blessing when they parted. Again she passed a sleepless night; while the horrible images which haunted her made it the most dreadful she had ever endured.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

The intrepid Swiss, that guards a foreign shore,
Condemn'd to climb his mountain cliffs no more,
If chance he hears the song so sweetly wild,
Which on those cliffs his infant years beguil'd,
Melts at the long-lost scenes that round him rise,
And sinks a martyr to repentant sighs.

THE melancholy trio surrounded the breakfast-table in silence. The moment it was cleared, Fanny quitted the room to fetch her work, but almost immediately re-entered with precipitation, and, with a face animated with delight, she held up a letter to her sister. Lavinia started forward, and catching it from her, she beheld, with emotions

tions indescribable, the well-known characters of her Berresford. With trembling hands she broke the seal, and while in the act, her joy received a considerable check; as the thought occurred that it must have been written prior to the storm, and therefore could not ease her apprehensions.

It was dated "Plymouth, November 4—midnight." The first lines ran as follow:—

"DEAREST, BEST-BELOVED LAVINIA !

"The whole fleet anchored in Plymouth Sound this evening, about nine o'clock ; and, as I found that we were to remain here for a few days, on account of an order received by the telegraph to that effect, I got on shore as soon as possible, and shall continue here till the signal for sailing is again displayed."

Lavinia could proceed no further ; in one moment she was transported from the
most.

most torturing apprehension, to the certain conviction that all her fears were groundless, and that him she adored was in health and safety!—Her sight became obscured, and laying down the letter, she burst into tears.

The Colonel and Fanny, greatly alarmed, approached Lavinia, and awaited, in silence, a confirmation of their fears. Lavinia, anxious to relieve them, though unable to speak, smiled most expressively, and pointed to the welcome lines which had thus delightfully oppressed her. The Colonel instantly read them aloud, and emphatically exclaimed, as he concluded—
“God be praised!”

Fanny threw her arms around her sister, saying, in an animated tone—“Oh how happy I am!”

A dreadful weight was removed from the breast of each, and gratitude to Heaven, and gentle complacency, now reigned in the place of fearful apprehension and agonizing

nizing suspense. Lavinia's extreme eagerness to peruse the remainder of her letter, restored her, sooner than any thing else could have done, to a sufficient degree of calmness to enable her to read what follows:—

“ DEAREST, BEST-BELOVED LAVINIA,

“ The whole fleet anchored in Plymouth Sound this evening, about nine o'clock; and as I found that we were to remain here for a few days, on account of an order received by the telegraph to that effect, I got on shore as soon as possible, and shall remain here till the signal for sailing is again displayed.—And now, my Lavinia, I shall minutely detail to you, *all* that I have thought and felt, since the last moment that I was blessed with your sight. Yet the recital admits not of variety, for each sensation of my heart has tended to the same point; and every reflection

Reflection terminates in the certain conviction, that, while absent from you, I must be miserable.

“ I cannot express what I felt on that wretched night I bid you farewell ; but I think there is a responsive sentiment in your own dear breast, which has already acquainted you with the nature of those feelings which beggar description. Oh, my Lavinia ! when I heard the park-gate clap after me, I could not controul the groan of despondency that burst from my heart. I felt, at that moment, as if shut out from every thing on earth that made life desirable. Never before did I so thoroughly understand the excess of anguish our first parents endured when driven out of Paradise.

“ I suffered the wretched jade that carried me to proceed in the heavy pace which seemed most congenial to its oppressed condition. It was a pitiless night—a keen east wind, accompanied with drizzling rain, beat exactly in my face ;
yet

yet I hastened not to escape from it ; for the impervious darkness which environed me, and the comfortless state of all outward objects, was completely in unison with the desolate sensations which reigned in my gloomy breast. I was aroused from my mournful cogitation, by the sudden halting of the animal that bore me—he had taken advantage of the gentle pace I had allowed him to continue, and seized the opportunity of falling asleep. I was under the necessity of applying both whip and spurs, before I could induce him to proceed ; for a long time he remained inexorable. I should have thanked him for his obduracy, as it was the means of restoring me, in some degree, to myself, by the exertion I was obliged to make.

“ It was past two o’clock when I reached L—. On dismounting from my horse, I could scarcely stand ; my limbs were perfectly stiff from the cold, and I was completely wet through. I found the sailors I had engaged punctual ; and in a quarter
of

of an hour, I was in the little state-room allotted for me on board the transport. I threw myself on the bed, all wet and comfortless as I was. I continued restless, and vainly endeavouring to find an easy position, till the beating of the *reveille*, and the noise on deck, denoted the preparation for getting under weigh. I instantly went up, and busied myself, for some time, in assisting the sailors; and this helped, in some measure, to dissipate the heavy gloom which hung over me.

“ In one respect, I am fortunate. The officers attached to the division I command, are most of them pleasant and gentlemanly. You may remember Captain Percival—you saw him once, on that ever-memorable, blessed night, *I* first beheld you; he quitted the regiment shortly after, on account of indisposition, and only joined on the eve of our embarkation;—had not that been the case, I think he would have been admitted a frequent visitor at Fairfield; for he is exactly such a man as I know

know its beloved inhabitants would approve—you have often heard me mention him as my particular *intime*. As we kept up a constant correspondence during his absence, I, of course, acquainted him with all those circumstances which so nearly concerned my happiness, which I was convinced would particularly interest him; for, from the first day I joined the regiment, we have been sincere friends, and a mutual confidence has subsisted between us. As he commands the light company, and is eldest captain, he should be attached to the first division, which Colonel Howard commands; but that considerate friend, knowing the society of Percival would be particularly acceptable to me, arranged it so, that we might both be on board the same ship. With a similar view to my comfort and amusement, the Colonel has placed the band of the regiment under my command, alledging, as a reason, my skill in music, and the improvement it made under my superintendence.

“ I have

“ I have often told you, I was in the habit of attending during the time they were practising, and of giving them such instruction as I was capable, but have entirely given this up, since one delightful idea has monopolized every faculty of my soul, and incapacitated me from bearing a part in any thing, which was not, in some measure, connected with that.

“ I have been rallied by some of the officers (in *inuendos*), upon the dejection of my deportment, so different from what I have been wont to appear, on many former occasions, when we have been going on service. An embarkation used to be the signal for elevating my spirits to more than their usual pitch of hilarity ;—but now, alas ! so diametrically opposite is the effect, that it has sunk me to a state of deeper melancholy than I ever before experienced ;—yet this is no way paradoxical, nor do my friends conceive it to be so, for I believe they are pretty well aware

of the cause from which this apparent change arises.—I might say to them, in the words of Ariosto,

Parmi verdete qui redire edire,
 Che non amor di patri ni studi,
 Ma de donna é cagion che non vagl'ire,
 Liberto t'el confesso, or chiudi
 La botca.

“ By eight o'clock in the morning, our little fleet were all unmoored. How invariably did I stand, with my back turned towards the shore we were quitting! I dared not look at it, surrounded, as I was at that moment, by so many observers;—had I, for an instant, indulged the weakness which assailed me, I should have exposed myself, even had I been certain that the whole universe were witness to my emotion. I attempted to converse with Percival upon indifferent subjects, yet I knew not one word he said; and this the incoherency of my answers plainly discovered.

vered—but he, who well understood the nature of my sensations, feelingly avoided noticing my abstraction.

“Six hours brought us to Spithead, just in time to save the convoy, who were in the act of setting sail. We had no communication whatever with the land, or I would have sent a few lines on shore—I had a note written in readiness. I surveyed, with mingled sensations of pain and pleasure, your favourite Isle of Wight, as we swiftly pursued our course;—how frequently have I heard you expatiate on its beauties!—*all* that you ever said on the subject, instantly recurred to my faithful memory.—Ah, my Lavinia,

‘ There’s not a look, a word of thine
 My soul has e’er forgot;
 Thou ne’er has bid a ringlet shine,
 Nor given thy locks one graceful twine,
 Which I remember not*.

“How different was this spot to what it

* Thomas Moore.

was when last I visited it!—*then*, cloathed in all the richness of vegetation, and displaying the profusion of luxuriant autumn—*now*, stripped of its glowing, variegated mantle, and arrayed, in exchange, in the sombre, russet vestment of austere winter. I moralized on this reverse, and compared it with the change in my own prospects; but as the metaphor is a *state* one, I will not expatiate upon it. With the day-light, we lost sight of the Isle of Wight. On this night, my Lavinia, I beheld you in my dreams; but, alas! this only added gloom to the painful reality.

“The next morning, the weather being fine, I ordered the band on deck, thinking, by attention to them, to beguile my melancholy. Wurtesburgh, our master of the band, always selects those airs he conceives to be my favourites; he accordingly fixed upon one of your tunes, which I had given him some time since, thinking, poor fellow, that it would please me. Never was judgment more erroneous!—The
moment

moment the familiar notes of the 'Wish' struck on my ear, every nerve in my frame seemed to vibrate to the sound—each turn of your melodious voice seemed to float on the air, and in an instant I seemed transported to your side ; but the delusion was but momentary, and left me more usceptible than ever to the wretched truth. I hung my head over the side of the vessel, and, will my Lavinia think me weak, when I tell her that my big tears augmented the ocean ? I believe the good German observed my dejection, and probably conceiving a lively air would prove beneficial to me, he next fixed upon a Scot's reel ; and this, most unfortunately, happened to be the very tune *we* first danced together, and which has ever since been our particular favourite. I really think that the painful emotions produced by this animating and cheerful strain, were more oppressive than the effects of the song ;—I saw your figure *so* plain—I could, in my mind's eye, behold every turn of

your body—the very expression of your countenance, when, smiling, you presented your hands.—Oh God, Lavinia! the recollection of it, even now, is too much for me, and makes me loathe my present existence. Forgive me!—I know you will condemn this impatient discontent—I will endeavour to be more rational.

“Under the impression of the sensations I have above described, I found it impossible to continue on deck, and I retired to my little state-room, and remained pondering over my misery, until summoned to dine.

“The next day I found that it was the intention of the Commodore to put into Plymouth; I was greatly pleased at this intelligence, and I trust we shall remain here long enough to allow me to hear from you. I need not tell you to write by return of post, for I know you will. During the three days I have been on board, I had scribbled several pages to you, which, at the time, it was my intention to have

have sent you; but on scanning them over, I found that they were of so desponding a cast, that I should have been ashamed you should have seen them;—I therefore destroyed them, and determined to devote this night to indulging myself in transcribing to you all I feel and have felt. I shall write to Lady Maria by to-morrow's post. My chief and only comfort is my friend Percival, to whom I scruple not to express myself without reserve;—he is kind enough to appear interested in all I say; and every sentiment I utter, seems reflected in the sympathizing breast of this true friend. I shall write to you, my Lavinia, every day that we remain here;—I feel averse to relinquishing my pen, and still fancy I have something more to say. But I must of necessity now cease to commune with you, for my paper is doubly filled, and I can procure no more, for I am the only person in the house whose restless spirit seeks not repose. I fancy this packet will surprise you at breakfast—Oh,

how I envy it ! Say every thing that is affectionate and respectful for me to the Colonel ;—and tell Fanny ; as I love her as my *sister*, I shall take the privilege of a *brother*, and desire that she will be kind to poor Colebrook.

“ God bless thee, dearest, best Lavinia ! I can find no terms expressive of what I feel for thee, nor an epithet adequate to conveying my affection—nor can I subscribe myself in any language which does not appear to me *cold* and *inanimate* ; I will therefore claim that title of which I am most *proud*, and which confers the highest degree of honour, as well as happiness, upon me, and call myself *yours*,

EDWARD COURTNEY BERRESFORD.”

The Colonel and Fanny had quitted the room while Lavinia was reading her letter, in order that she might enjoy the perusal of it without restraint, and she was

was just recommencing it for the third time, when they entered the apartment. She instantly presented the letter to her father, for there was nothing in it she wished to conceal, and she knew he would be gratified by a sight of it. Fanny was also allowed to see it;—when she had concluded, she, laughing, said—“If Colebrook would write me such an epistle as *this*, it would not be necessary to *tell* me to be kind to him.”

“You cannot question Colebrook’s talents,” cried the Colonel; “I dare say, if he was addressing an object of whose affection he was as well assured as Berresford is of Lavinia’s, he would not be deficient in eloquence—though I allow that Berresford has a peculiarly refined and interesting mode of expression.”

Tranquillity was now restored at Fairfield. Lavinia employed the morning in writing to Berresford, and dispatched her letter in time to save the Western post that evening.

As had been arranged, the Colonel and his daughters repaired to Colebrook Hall to dine, and took up their residence there, for a short time. Lavinia was serene, though not lively; and she felt so truly grateful to Providence for the relief she experienced from the anxiety she had so lately endured, that she thought it impious to murmur, even *mentally*.

For three successive days she received large packets from Berresford, all dated Plymouth. The two first she answered immediately; but the *last* informed her that he was on the point of re-embarking, and that the fleet was unmoored, the wind being then quite fair. I have omitted inserting these letters, being aware that the effusions addressed to a beloved object are, in general, wholly uninteresting to all but ~~those~~ whose corresponding sentiment converts into a *master-piece* of eloquence, what ~~we~~ might imagine insipid and ridiculous.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

For pensive pleasures cannot always charm
The breast with hope, and animation warm.

E. P.

THERE were no guests inmates at Colebrook Hall, beside the Fairfield family, but select parties of their neighbouring friends were assembled almost daily at dinner. Mr. and Mrs. Williams frequently augmented the number. Time passed away with quiet composure; and if there was nothing to delight, there was at least nothing to torment. Fanny was more than usually complaisant to Frank Colebrook—her spirits had received a check, from the recent uneasiness she had experienced.

rienced on her sister's account; and though she still avoided all serious conversation with him, yet, from her demeanor towards him, he was led to imagine that she would not long retain this obduracy. Under the influence of this supposition, Colebrook felt perfectly happy, and forbore to press his suit, dreading to interrupt the felicity he then enjoyed. A month passed in this manner, and the Colonel and his daughters, accompanied by Colebrook and his sister, returned to Fairfield.

Lavinia had heard nothing of Berresford since he left Plymouth, nor could she reasonably expect it. The newspapers every day gave a different rumour of the destination of the expedition which had lately sailed, but nothing authentic could be learnt from that quarter.

The winter was severe, and the young people were often obliged to confine themselves to the house, when battledore and shuttlecock, music, dancing, and vari-

ous

ous games of skill, helped to beguile the time. Lavinia's prevailing turn for study and improvement, prevented her from ever feeling the enervating influence of *ennui*, though melancholy and regret would, spite of philosophy, sometimes intrude.

I forbore to expatiate on the nature of her feelings, on the day which had been named for the solemnization of her nuptials. I was apprehensive of wearying the reader, by a repetition of mournful descriptions, and therefore avoided entering into particulars.

A clear frosty morning was always the signal for a walk. One day, Lavinia, not being at leisure to accompany the rest of the party in their *sortie*, promised to follow them. Having finished the business which detained her, she repaired to the sea-side, where she expected to find them; but not immediately perceiving them, and being uncertain which direction they had pursued, she seated herself on the side of a
boat,

boat, which lay on shore, and continued, for some time, gazing on the ocean. Her cogitations were indeed of the most dejected cast—the weather was tempestuous, and the sea extremely rough;—under the influence of the deep melancholy which at this moment assailed her, she composed the following sonnet:—

Hark, hark! the sullen surges roar,
And mournful howls the wind;
The billowy waves roll o'er and o'er,
In awful force combin'd.

These sounds, united, kindly form
A requiem sad for those,
Whose cruel fate we deeply mourn,
Whom ocean's waves enclose.

Yet why should we their lot deplore,
Now freed from cares and strife?
'Tis we deserve compassion more,
Still toiling on through life.

For like the troubled element I view,
The tempestuous course we still pursue.

Some weeks passed without any thing
occurring

occurring worthy of mention, except that Fanny had renewed her old system of quarrelling with Colebrook, who was as far as ever from having his fate decided ; both he and his sister had been returned home for some time. Lavinia now became excessively anxious to hear from Berresford ; he had been absent three months, and no intelligence had been received concerning the expedition. Again all her comfort was annihilated, and doubt and suspense resumed their dominion in her breast ; when she was once more relieved, in some degree, by the receipt of a packet dated " Gibraltar," three weeks after the convoy had sailed from Plymouth Sound. Berresford gave a most particular account of every thing that had occurred during the voyage, but could give no satisfaction as to their destination, as that yet remained a mystery, and every opinion on the subject was founded on supposition. It was generally imagined they were destined to reinforce an army which had sailed some
6 time

time previous to the present, and had proceeded up the Mediterranean, which was the course they were about to follow, as soon as the wind, which was then foul, would permit them. The remainder of this epistle was couched in language most acceptable and delightful to Lavinia, but as it concerned no one else, I shall not transcribe it. The length of time which had elapsed since this letter was written, made it less acceptable than it otherwise would have been to Lavinia. The vessel by which it was conveyed, had been detained by unfavourable weather upwards of two months;—this is by no means unusual in the winter.

The inclemency of the season had prevented the inhabitants of Fairfield from joining in any of the public amusements which were passing at L——; and as Lavinia was indifferent to them, and the Colonel thought Fanny as well without them, he had not thought it worth the hazard of returning home at night, through
rain

rain and snow, at the late hour at which such entertainments generally conclude. Yet it was far from Colonel Fairfield's wishes to deprive his daughters of innocent enjoyments; and though Fanny spoke not, her father well knew that she desired most anxiously, to join in the recreations which many of her young associates partook of:—in order, therefore, to gratify her, and, at the same time, imagining that a temporary absence from Fairfield would but the more endear them to it, he proposed hiring a ready-furnished house at L——, for one month, when they might, without inconvenience, join in the amusements going forward there. Fanny was enchanted with the proposal; and Lavinia, though in her heart dissatisfied with it, objected not, for she thought it unjust to disappoint her sister, because she herself was disinclined for gaiety. The Colonel had, in fact, not only consulted Fanny's inclination in this proposal, but he thought it would be beneficial to Lavinia; for though she

she always endeavoured to appear cheerful, and never would allow that she was otherwise, yet her tell-tale countenance would frequently discover the uneasiness of her mind. The Colonel imagined that even a change in objects by which she was surrounded, would, in some measure, interrupt the monotony of those reflections which were nursed in solitude, and which scenes ever familiar to the eye, by a constant contemplation, tend to encrease; and although these reflections may be refined and exalted in the extreme, yet variety is necessary to human nature;—though it be unwished for, yet is it salutary—serious thoughts should not wholly engross our minds—when too much indulged, it unfits us for society, and engenders a gloomy and joyless spirit;—the imagination should not be permitted to dwell too long on any *one* subject:—man's capacity is not profound—his ideas soon become confused, and he is incapable of justly discriminating, when his reason is clouded
and

and debilitated by continually pondering on the same subject.—True, reason is the offspring of reflection, and it is by reflection alone that reason can ever attain pre-eminence; yet if reflection be indulged beyond the limits of moderation, it is more than probable that it will, like a weak and injudicious parent, neglect the duty which it owes to its offspring, reason, and by a false representation of reality, created by melancholy meditations, cloud and obscure the god-like attribute, until it shall no longer deserve the name it bears. It is with the mind as with our visual orbs, when we have contemplated the same object for a considerable time, it appears dim and confused, and we are no longer capable of discerning, with correctness, either its size, shape, or colour. Forgive me, reader, if I have moralized too long, but

“ Lull'd in the countless chambers of the brain,
Our thoughts are link'd by many a hidden chain;
Awake but one, and lo! what myriads rise!
Each stamps its image as the other flies—

Each,

Each, as the various avenues of sense,
Delight or sorrow to the soul dispense,
Brightens or fades—yet all with magic art,
Control the latent fibres of the heart*.

And now, humbly hoping I may have created some slight degree of interest, I will resume my tale.

Early in February, Colonel Fairfield and his family removed to L——. Miss Colebrook was solicited to become their guest, during their absence from the country; but she was necessitated to decline the invitation, as Lady Colebrook expected some ladies on a visit at Colebrook Hall. Her nephew, also, whom the Fairfields had frequently seen when a boy, had written to Sir Francis, informing him he should speedily be in Hampshire. This youth was possessed of very considerable property;—he had lost both his parents in his infancy, and Sir Francis Colebrook had been nominated by them as his guardian

* Rogers's "Pleasures of Memory."

—a duty

—a duty he had most religiously performed. A few months previous to the present epoch, he had delivered into his possession, on his coming of age, his paternal estate, free from all incumbrances. Mr. Marlow, so was he named, at the age of nineteen, while he was yet at College, had been seized with that violent epidemic disease, which prevails so universally among the youths of the present day, ycleped the *military manta*. Sir Francis had not offered any objection to his wishes, and a short time beheld him decked in all the pomp of war, and prefacing his name with the ardently-desired, *enviable*, and *illustrious* title of *Ensign*. He had spent the last two years in murdering time in country quarters, and had just accomplished a most wonderful discovery, which was—that a military life was not consonant to his feelings. Having once ascertained this point, he, without further hesitation, sent in his resignation, and wrote to Sir Francis, informing him of the resolution he had taken,

ken, and other particulars relating to the plan of life it was his intention to adopt, and promised to repair to the Hall, as soon as the business which detained him in London was completed. Sir Francis was not much surprised at the intelligence communicated in Mr. Marlow's letter; he did not think him possessed of a sufficiently ardent and enterprising spirit, to shine as a soldier; and was rather pleased, that he should adopt the more retired path of life. Mr. Marlow was, by no means, an interesting character, but his probity and honour were unimpeachable, and he was what might, with justice, be termed a worthy young man;—but in manners, mind and conversation, he was an every-day sort of being, easily pleased, and pleasing to those who required neither refinement or animation to amuse them. It cannot be concluded, after what I have said of Mr. Marlow, that either Sir Francis or Lady Colebrook could feel a very lively affection for him; but they entertained

tained a sincere regard for him, and ever conducted themselves, in respect to him, as they would have done, had he been their son.

CHAP. XV.

Each faculty, each power thy will obey,
And inclination ever leads the way.

LUCAN'S *Pharsalia*, translated by Rowe.

THE Fairfield family had been a week resident at L——, during which they had attended one assembly, and twice visited the theatre; the rest of the time had been taken up in visiting and receiving visitors, as they had a universal acquaintance with *les gens comme il faut* in the town and its vicinage.

One

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One morning, as the Colonel and his daughters were walking on the sea shore, surveying the shipping, they observed that the guard-ship had been changed. The Colonel enquired of some sailors standing near, respecting it; and he was informed that the frigate which had been stationed there for some time, had been ordered on a cruize; and that she had that morning been relieved by the —, of fifty guns, commanded by Captain Berresford. Lavinia started at the familiar sound of a name, which made her heart vibrate with a mingled sensation of pain and pleasure. The Colonel was convinced this could be no other than Major Berresford's brother, as he remembered having read in the newspaper, of his being appointed to this very ship; and he immediately returned home, and wrote a note to Captain Berresford, informing him, that his family and self were then at L——; and requesting he would honour them with his
com-

company that day at dinner. He dispatched this by a wherry to the ship, which lay about three miles from the shore, and desired the sailor to bring back an answer.

Colonel Fairfield was aware that his note would not surprise Captain Berresford, who had been long acquainted with his family by report. Lavinia was agitated with contending emotions, at the idea of seeing one so nearly connected with her beloved. She wondered whether there was any likeness?—one moment she hoped there was; and the next, she feared the sight of what might so forcibly recall the image of him so far away, and awaken the keenest anguish at the conviction of their sad separation.

Young Colebrook was to dine with them on this day. The visitors expected at the Hall were not yet arrived, and he devoted every moment he could call his own, to his fair despot. He was not much pleased when he heard that Captain Berresford had been invited to join the party; he foresaw

a new source of uneasiness:—Fanny had always openly declared her admiration of Major Berresford; and frequently, when she wanted to torment Colebrook, she would say, that she wished there were *two* Major Berresfords, and then she might be as happy as her sister. This had repeatedly been a source of discord between them; and poor Colebrook imagined, that if there was anybody like Major Berresford, it was, in all human probability, his brother; and hence he feared a rival in him, even before he saw him. Fanny instantly penetrated his feelings on the occasion, and, as usual, irritated them, by expressing, in the most lively terms, the pleasure she promised herself, in Captain Berresford's society.

In about an hour after the note had been delivered, Captain Berresford was announced. The young ladies were not present at his entrance. Colonel Fairfield received him in the most friendly manner, which Captain Berresford returned with
equal

equal warmth. He assured the Colonel it had been his intention that very morning, prior to the receipt of his note, to pay his respects to him, as he had been informed by a friend who had visited him on board his ship, that Colonel Fairfield and his family were at L——. The mutual compliments being ended, Captain Berresford was introduced to Colebrook, who was present; and shortly after the sisters made their appearance.

Captain Berresford was generally allowed to be a very handsome man. He was not so tall as his brother Edward, by two inches, but considerably stouter. He had just attained his twenty-seventh year; he had perfectly the air and manners of a well-bred gentleman, but not the *tonnish* appearance, that innate gracefulness, which so eminently distinguished the Major. There was a strong family likeness in their countenances; but the features of Captain Berresford were longer, and, of course, more prominent; his eyes, though the

same colour, wanted both the languor and brilliancy which alternately animated those of his brother. As to his mental qualifications, they were such as constituted him an estimable character, and agreeable companion. He had repeatedly rendered himself conspicuous in the service of his country, and glory was his idol ;—but while unemployed in the actual pursuit of it, he had no objection to amuse his time by assiduities to the fair. In this he was unlike his brother Edward, for marriage was the last thing he would have thought of, as he conceived the felicity of the connubial state incompatible with a sailor's life ; and his ideas were always what the *world* denominates strictly honourable ; yet he ever felt additional satisfaction, if, when he quitted a place, he imagined he left some aching hearts behind him. He had never taken the trouble to analyze his feelings on such occasions, or he undoubtedly would have discovered that they originated in vanity : but he was not in the *habit* of reflecting

flecting much on any subject, and seldom puzzled himself by minute investigations of *causes* and *effects*. He pursued the old beaten path, and subscribed to the general opinion of what is *right* and what *wrong*; and if he acted in conformity to that, he conceived he had done his duty. Had any one accused him of being vain, and of cruelly taking pleasure in the distress he himself had caused, he would have shrunk with horror from the accusation, and believed himself insulted and traduced—so little did he understand the nature of his own heart—so far was he from the most distant suspicion of the real motives which actuated his conduct. In other respects, he was liberal-minded and generous to profusion, and gifted, in a superior degree, with all those enthusiastic virtues *allowed* to be the *characteristics* of a *British* *tar*.

The effect his presence produced on the sisters, was a diametrical contrast. For the first hour Lavinia was in his company, she was silent, and more than usually seri-

ous, even to dejection; and her utmost efforts could not enable her to join in conversation.

Fanny was animated to the highest pitch; she discoursed with vivacity and brilliancy, and appeared in her most fascinating colours; so much so, that Captain Berresford was almost tempted to question, for the first time, his brother Edward's judgment and discrimination, in the election he had made. Colonel Fairfield was greatly pleased to have it in his power to shew any attention to the brother of him he so highly estimated. Colebrook was, after Lavinia, the most reserved of the party.

When the young ladies retired after dinner, Lavinia had time to rally her spirits, and, in some degree, shake off the oppression she laboured under. On first beholding Captain Berresford, she had been forcibly struck by his resemblance to her lover; but after having been for some time in his company, this expression gradually

dually faded : his manners were unlike his brother's ; his voice was rough, and his language, though correct, totally differed from the spontaneous eloquence with which the Major expressed himself. These circumstances combined, tended, in a great measure, to do away the effect produced on his first appearance, on Lavinia ; and when she again met him, he beheld her to much greater advantage than he had in the morning. Captain Berresford was desirous of shewing every attention to Lavinia, on account of the connexion which it was expected she would form with his family ; he very pertinently imagined that no subject could be so interesting to her, as a description of scenes in which the Major had acted the principal part, and he amused her by a thousand anecdotes of their childhood, and made a point of displaying his brother Edward's superior wit and talents to the greatest advantage. She could have attended for ever to themes like these, and Captain Ber-

resford felt happy in having succeeded in entertaining her. Colonel Fairfield listened with almost equal pleasure to the relation of his favourite's exploits.

While these three were thus engaged, Fanny and Colebrook, who were seated at a distance, were left to divert each other; but as Fanny was not in the humour to amuse her companion, she determined she would interest his feelings in some way, for which reason she continued expatiating on the *agremens* of Captain Berresford—his strong resemblance to the Major; and concluded by saying, she hoped, most anxiously, that he would go the ball which was to take place on the succeeding night.

To all this Colebrook made no answer, except when absolutely extorted from him by a direct interrogation; but the vexed aspect his features assumed, and the uneasy posture of his body, which he was constantly changing, together with the frequent but suppressed sighs which agitated his breast, bore ample testimony of Miss Fanny's

Fanny's prowess in the art of tormenting.

After partaking of a comfortable supper, Captain Berresford departed, promising, at the Colonel's request, to dine with him the next day, in order to accompany them to the assembly in the evening. The Colonel expected Colebrook would remain all night, and requested him to take possession of a spare apartment, which he had before frequently occupied; but though Colebrook had made no effort to depart before Captain Berresford, the moment he was gone, he declared it was his intention to return home.

"Oh, nonsense!" cried the Colonel; "you cannot think of leaving us to-night; it is near one o'clock—all the family would be in bed."

"Oh, Sir, that is of no consequence;—I could easily knock up some of the servants."

"And alarm the whole house," rejoined the Colonel; "ridiculous! I shall not allow you to do any such thing."

M 5

"Indeed,

"Indeed, Sir, I must."

During this little altercation, Fanny was standing with her arms folded, and her eyes fixed on the fire, with an air of abstraction, from which it might have been inferred, that she was unconscious of what was passing ; but, on the contrary, she lost not a syllable of the dialogue. She knew, from experience, that one word from her lips, would, at once, make Colebrook relinquish his determination to go home ; and she was convinced that if she did not, in some way, betray a desire that he should stay, that he would, in spite of opposition, continue resolute. Colonel Fairfield went to the window, to ascertain the weather, and throwing up the sash, he perceived that it rained hard.

"Lay down your hat, Frank," cried he ; "it is pouring torrents.—I shall not allow any of my servants to saddle your horse, but I shall bid them lock the stable, and go to bed ; so you may as well comply with a good grace."

"Oh

"Oh no, Sir, indeed it is impossible; —I cannot stay to-night." With these words he moved towards the door.

"Why, Colebrook," exclaimed the Colonel, "I am really angry with you—I never knew you so ridiculously obstinate before; what can be the meaning of all this?"

As he uttered the last words, he cast a glance at Fanny. She perceived it, but wished to appear as if she had not; and turning to a table, she took up a newspaper which was lying on it, and pretended to be reading with deep attention. Colebrook had also observed the Colonel glance at Fanny, and anxious to escape his penetrating eye, being convinced, from Fanny's manner, and her studiously avoiding to look at him, that she wished not to detain him, he opened the door.

"Your mother will think me a brute to let you go home on such a night," cried the Colonel.

At this moment, Fanny slowly raised her

eyes, and meeting those of Colebrook, she exclaimed, in the gentle voice of solicitation—" You had better stay."

Colebrook answered not—his eyes fell to the ground ; for a moment he remained motionless—when he slowly closed the door, while the crimson blood flushed his face ; for he was, in truth, ashamed of thus suddenly changing his resolution. As he advanced into the room, he muttered something about his fear of alarming his mother at that late hour ; and replacing himself, he seemed to have forgotten that all the family were waiting to go to bed. Fanny could scarcely subdue the smile of exultation and ridicule that played around her mouth, demonstrating the satisfaction she experienced, at the evidence she received of the total subjugation in which she held her slave.

CHAP. XVI.

Vanquish'd, and long accustom'd to submit,
With patience underneath our loads we sit :
Our chains alone our slavish fears excuse,
While we bear ill, we know not to refuse.

LUCAN'S Pharsalia.

WHILE they were at breakfast the next morning, a servant arrived, to inform Mr. Colebrook that the expected visitors had reached Colebrook Hall, late on the preceding night. As soon as the meal was finished, Colebrook prepared to depart. The Colonel, with his accustomed good-nature, said—"I hope, after you have paid your compliments, and sacrificed a few hours to ceremony, you will still be able
to

to join us at dinner, and go to the ball in the evening."

"You are very kind, Sir; but I fear it will not be in my power to dine with you to-day, but I shall certainly meet you at the ball. I think it probable that my mother and sister, if Mrs. Beason is not too much fatigued with her journey, will also go to the assembly, in which case, my father and myself must escort them; but I shall see you there.—I hope," continued he, approaching Fanny, and lowering his voice, "I shall have the honour of dancing the first set with you?"

Fanny hesitated. She was piqued that he had declined dining with them, though common reason must have assured her, had she listened to it, that it would have been the height of rudeness to his mother's friends, if he had consented to dine out on the first day of their arrival; but she was not in the habit of consulting common reason, and she replied, with assumed nonchalance—"Oh, doubtless Miss Beason

Beason will expect you to dance the first set with *her* ; and I am sure I should be extremely sorry to deprive her of her partner."

Colebrook instantly perceived that he had done something amiss ; it was plain she was offended ; but all his ingenuity could not enable him to discover the cause—" You know," cried he, in a humble and conciliating tone, attempting to take her hand, which she pettishly snatched from him, " you know that you have a prior *right* to every other on my *hand* ; and if you refuse it, Fanny, it shall never be another's."

Fanny felt confused, yet pleased—a sensation she vainly wished to conceal, for the sudden glow that overspread her face denoted the pleasure she felt. Colebrook hailed the rising emotion with enthusiasm, and catching the hand she no longer prevented his taking, he cried—" Oh, Fanny ! say, will you have it ?"

She averted her face, and laughing, said
—" Oh,

—“ Oh yes ! certainly for the *two first dances.*”

Colebrook looked disappointed, as he exclaimed—“ ’Tis cruel thus to keep me in continual suspense.”

“ Suspense !” repeated Fanny ; “ have I not positively told you that I will dance with you, and what more can I say ?”

With these words she left him, and approached her sister, under pretence of having something particular to say to her, but, in reality, to terminate a conversation which she did not wish should have a decisive conclusion.

Captain Berresford, as was expected, joined the Fairfield family at dinner, and attended them to the assembly. It was late when they entered the ball-room, and the dancing was just commencing. Captain Berresford had requested Lavinia’s hand prior to their arrival, and they therefore immediately joined the dancers. Fanny looked around for her partner, and was extremely mortified when she found that
the

the Colebrook party were not yet come. She instantly began to blame Colebrook, in her own mind, for having presumed to engage her, and then be so remiss as not to be there in time to claim her: she resolutely shut her eyes against the conviction that presented itself, that he must, of course, be dependant on the party he was to escort. This she would not admit of as an excuse, but all her former ire at his refusing to dine with them, returned, and she determined to stand up with the first person that asked her. This she had immediately an opportunity of doing, for she had always partners at command; and she accepted the offer of a gentleman of the neighbourhood, who had long been a candidate for her favour.

She had scarcely taken her place in the dance, when Sir Francis, Lady, and Miss Colebrook, accompanied by Mrs. Beason and her daughter, attended by Frank Colebrook, entered. Mrs. Beason was a respectable-looking elderly woman, and

Harriet

Harriet Beason, her only child, a good-natured rosy-cheeked girl; she was short, and too much *en bon point* to allow her figure to be interesting; she had black eyes, which were generally esteemed *fine*, because they *were black*, but to a nice observer they were not unlike two jet beads; her cheeks were too plump for her countenance to be expressive; her nose was very small, her teeth tolerable, and her chin remarkably short;—she was called a pretty girl; and if an appearance of good-humour, and a readiness to oblige, could make her agreeable, she was so. Fanny cast one glance upon her, and was instantly satisfied that there was no danger of a rival in Miss Beason, as she could not stand a competition with herself.

The entrance of this party was the signal for Fanny to assume an air of the utmost gaiety; she talked incessantly to her partner, and was resolved not even to look at Colebrook, or in any way give him an opportunity of exculpating himself, which
her

her self-consequence conceived to be impossible. Colebrook, in fear, and almost trembling, sought his tyrant; he foresaw, plainly, what awaited him, and had, for the last two hours, been hurrying on the party, in hopes of arriving in good time; but Mrs. Beason, who was not much in the habit of going into public, had taken a most unconscionable time to adorn herself. The carriage had been detained for near an hour at the door, during which, Colebrook had been pacing the hall with the utmost impatience, almost tempted to curse the poor old lady for the uneasiness she made him suffer, and the still greater which he was certain was in store for him. He soon perceived that Fanny had joined the dance; this placed him in a still more unpleasant predicament, for, considering himself certain of dancing with Fanny the first set, he had, in the course of the day, requested Miss Beason as a partner for the second, and he dared not ask Fanny for the third, for, in her present temper of mind,

mind, he was convinced she would refuse him, even if she was not pre-engaged; yet he could not help feeling in some degree hurt, when he found that the dancing had only just begun, and he thought that Fanny might have waited so short a time, without lowering her dignity. For near a quarter of an hour, he stood exactly opposite to her, trying to catch her eye, but in vain; she resolutely avoided looking that way. She was perfectly aware of the position he had taken up, and of his motives for so doing. Finding this was to no purpose, he slowly walked round behind her, and stood close to her; once or twice, in a low voice, he attempted to speak, but she obstinately affected not to hear him, or even to perceive him, and continued apparently engrossed with her partner.

The dance now being nearly concluded, and Fanny being engaged for the next set to Captain Berresford, she thought she might as well give Colebrook an opportunity

nity of asking her, which she was quite sure he would, and then she should have the pleasure of refusing him. She accordingly, as if by accident, stepped back, in which act she came in contact with Colebrook, when turning her head, she exclaimed, with affected surprise—"Oh, how d'y'e do?—have you been here long?"

Colebrook, delighted at this unexpected address, answered emphatically—"Yes, *very* long!—The dancing was only just commenced when we came in. It was impossible I could have been here sooner; but had I foreseen a probability of delay, I certainly would have arranged it so, that I might have arrived in time; but indeed I am perfectly blameless;—you, who are so well acquainted with my inclinations, ought surely to exonerate me."

"Oh, Heavens!" cried Fanny, "I am not at all offended with you, if you mean that; it is of no consequence—it made not the least difference, I assure you."

"However lightly you may consider it,

Miss

“ Well, what is it ? ” said Fanny, seating herself ; “ I suppose something of great importance, by the serious face you put on.”

“ I only wish to know,” continued Lavinia, “ *why* you will not dance with Francis to-night ? ”

Fanny coloured, and hesitating a moment, she cast her eyes downwards, and then said—“ How can I, when I am engaged ? ”

“ Certainly not ; but who are you going to dance with, after Captain Berresford ? ”

Fanny looked completely at a loss, and answered not ; Lavinia waited some time in vain, when she went on—“ I know very well you are not engaged for the third set, and I shall go and tell Francis you will dance it with him.”

With these words she arose to execute her intention, but Fanny detained her, catching hold of her dress, and entreating, in a supplicating voice, that she would not
force

force her to dance with Francis, for she conceived he had behaved extremely rude to her, in not having kept his first engagement. Lavinia replied to her, by a particular explanation of the reasons why he could not ; and concluded by saying, she was sure that their father, should it come to his knowledge, would be very much vexed with her for her treatment of poor Colebrook. Fanny made no farther effort to detain her, and Lavinia beckoned to Colebrook, and told him, that if he still wished it, Fanny would dance the third set with him. He thanked her a thousand times for her successful mediation, and immediately approached Fanny, to express his gratitude for her condescension. The only notice she took of him, or his fine speech, was by a formal bend of her head ; when turning to the person next her, she entered into conversation, and appeared to have forgotten that he was near her. He almost regretted having applied to Lavinia, as he plainly perceived that it

What a contrast in her sensations, to what they had been a few months before!—what a sad vacuum was formed in the society! But Lavinia was not so weak as to imagine that any change in the local position of things had, in reality, taken place, because they no longer contributed to her entertainment; nor did she, like many who have lost their taste for enjoyment, find fault with every thing, and protest that the dance was not supported with spirit, or that the performance at the theatres was ill-executed and wearisome. True, all this appeared to her “stale, flat, and unprofitable;” but she was conscious that this effect was produced from a cause within, and that it was her feelings only which had undergone a revolution. She generally danced *one* or *two* sets in the course of the night, for the before-mentioned reason of avoiding particularity.

Lavinia was seated on one side of Lady Colebrook, who was amusing Mrs. Beason
with

with accounts of the various characters by whom they were surrounded. Being perfectly at liberty, Lavinia had leisure to observe her sister, whose conduct she witnessed with the most painful emotion. She was grieved to see her so truly ridiculous—she knew perfectly every feeling of her heart. She was confident that, in reality, she was fondly attached to Francis Colebrook, and that nothing could surpass the gratification she experienced at the most trifling circumstance which denoted the unbounded power she possessed over his affection; and from her too great desire to ascertain the strength of her influence over him, sprung all those useless quarrels, and childish altercations, that were continually recurring. Lavinia trembled for their mutual peace! It was useless to speak to her sister on the subject, for she knew, from experience, that whatever she might say, though Fanny appeared affected at the time by her admonitions, yet the lapse of a few hours, or at most, days, did away its effects,

For still, with eyes averse, the right she view'd,

But, with a steady will, the wrong pursu'd*.

The third set was begun before Fanny thought fit to allow her partner, who had been some time silently waiting near her, to lead her to her place, which was next Miss Colebrook, who was dancing with Captain Berresford. Fanny entered into conversation with them, wholly disregarding her own partner, and affecting a total abstraction, whenever he attempted to join in the discourse. Captain Berresford was highly gratified with this particular distinction, which he, of course, attributed to a predilection in his favour, and very soon became so intoxicated with this idea, he became almost as regardless of his partner as Fanny was of hers; but his good breeding would not permit him to be intentionally rude, and he made repeated apologies for his inattention. Miss Colebrook was

* Ariosto.

good-

good-natured and unassuming, and on her own account she regarded it not; but the contemptuous manner in which she beheld her brother treated, pained her excessively. He had been left to figure away alone to every couple that had passed; and when they got to the top, Fanny waited so long before she began, that Colebrook imagined she did not intend to go down at all: at length she led off, but avoided, whenever it was possible, to give him her hand: after having gone through about six couple, she complained of fatigue, and walked to the bottom, leaving her partner to follow if he chose.

Colebrook's dormant faculties were at length aroused; he could not brook this repeated contumely, and he meditated how it was most advisable to conduct himself, in such a way as should demonstrate how much he conceived himself insulted. At the beginning of the evening, he had imagined that Fanny was merely acting the part she had so frequently performed be-

fore, and he had hoped, after due concession on his part, that she would have been appeased ; but he now seriously thought that she had really conceived a partiality for Captain Berresford, and that she had seized this opportunity to break off all connexion with himself, and so free herself at once from his addresses, in order that she might encourage those of Captain Berresford. Agonizing were his sensations, as these ideas occurred ; but his spirit once roused, he determined to act like a man ;—the second dance struck up, and he was still irresolute what to do, when his sister beckoned to him, and drawing him aside, she said, in a trembling voice—“ Good Heaven, Francis ! how can you bear to be treated thus ? Were I in your place, I would quit her instantly, for if she does not chuse to dance, she does not want a partner.”

Colebrook hesitated—then said, with great emotion—“ I should be sorry to behave with rudeness to any woman.”

“ Is

"Is it possible," rejoined his sister, you should still be so weak?"

"Oh, do not blame me, Elizabeth; I will do as you desire me, but I cannot leave her, without informing her of my intention."

"And why not?—she deserves not the smallest consideration."

Colebrook shook his head, and returned to his place. A lady at this moment set to him, with whom he was intimately acquainted, and not perceiving his partner, she said, laughing—"Are you dancing by yourself?" This speech, together with a look from his sister, who had heard it, confirmed his wavering resolution; and assuming an air of indifference, though his heart beat so violently, he could scarcely articulate, he crossed over to Fanny. He was forced to touch her sleeve before she would attend to him. She turned round, expecting to be addressed in a supplicating accent; what then was her amazement, when Colebrook said—"As you do

not seem inclined to dance, I should imagine a partner is unnecessary—I shall therefore intrude on you no farther.”

He pronounced these words in a hurried manner, when, coldly bowing, he walked away. To describe Fanny's feelings would be impossible ;—astonishment and mortified pride, rendered her speechless, nay, for a few moments, motionless. She felt herself in a peculiarly ridiculous situation, and she conceived every one must perceive it: but here she was mistaken, for not even Captain Berresford had observed what had past ; for Colebrook, with that scrupulous delicacy which he always maintained towards her who so little merited it, had spoken so low as not to be heard by any but herself.

As soon as Fanny could recover herself, she hastened to a seat near an old lady, with whom she was slightly acquainted. What to do she knew not ; for in surveying the apartment in search of her sister, she perceived that Lavinia was in earnest
conversation

conversation with Colebrook, and she doubted not he was complaining of her behaviour towards him. She now, for the first time, felt seriously offended with him; never before had she doubted her influence over his heart. The affront her vanity sustained—the mortification her pride suffered, were pleasing-sensations, compared to the pang she endured at the suggestion that his love for her was diminished. Never, till this moment, was Fanny aware of how much she loved Colebrook, and never had she been so desirous to conceal that sentiment. That he could thus deliberately insult her, as she conceived it, by leaving her before the dance was finished, was a mystery she could not solve—so unlike his habitual behaviour towards her; even had she been but the acquaintance of the night, she would have been amazed at such conduct. Similar reflections flew rapidly through her brain, while she seemed totally to overlook the provocation which Colebrook had received. She was quite at a

loss how to act, in order to demonstrate to him her extreme displeasure, for she could not conduct herself with greater *hauteur* or coldness than she had done during the preceding part of the evening; but she flattered herself that he would still solicit her, and humble himself more than ever, in hopes to obtain her pardon, when she resolved to be inexorable, until she was revenged for the slight he had put upon her.

The dance now concluded, and Captain Berresford, as soon as he had led his partner to a seat, approached Fanny, and enquired the cause of her precipitate retreat? She waved the question, by pleading fatigue;—he seated himself by her, and instantly resumed the lively strain of conversation which they had before supported; he perceived that she was absent, but still appeared anxious to retain him near her. Lavinia was still engrossed with Colebrook, when perceiving her father enter the apartment, she accosted him, and proposed going home, though it was yet early. He readily

readily complied, and went in search of her sister. The Colonel was wholly unacquainted with the events of the evening, and therefore addressed Fanny in his accustomed manner, and told her, her sister wished to go home. Fanny offered no objection, and accepting Captain Berresford's proffered arm, she joined Lavinia. Colebrook was standing close by her, but he did not draw back, as Fanny expected he would have done, at her approach, but he maintained his position, without appearing to notice her. The Colonel went to summon their carriage, and in a few minutes returned, and informed them that it was waiting. Colebrook offered his arm to Lavinia, who, having politely taken leave of Lady Colebrook and her friends, was conducted by him to the carriage, when affectionately shaking hands with her and the Colonel, he wished them a good-night, and left them, slightly bowing to Fanny, without looking at her, as he passed.

A few minutes brought them to their

own door. When seated round the supper-table, the Colonel observed that they were very silent, which was seldom the case after a ball. Fanny said she was very much tired, and after swallowing a jelly, she rose, and taking her candle, she said she was so sleepy, she really could not sit up any longer. The Colonel immediately concluded that she had had an altercation with Colebrook, but not supposing it to be of a serious nature, he enquired no farther.

CHAP. XVII.

Reflect, ye gentle dames, how much they know,
Who gain experience from another's woe!

ARIOSTO.

IN the solitude of her chamber, Fanny had time for reflection. As she revolved over the events of the evening, her anger against Colebrook was, by degrees, removed to herself. Her better reason gained the pre-eminence, and on reviewing her own conduct, she discovered enough to justify her lover. What an additional sting was added to the acuteness of her feelings, when she found herself obliged to acknowledge that all she suffered was owing to her own imprudence. Had
Colebrook

Colebrook continued tamely to endure her disdain, she would, probably, never have made these reflections: but what considerably increased her uneasiness, and brought conviction to her wayward fancy, was the reserved and distant manner her sister had maintained towards her during the evening, by which she was convinced that she was seriously displeased with her; and perhaps this silent method of reprehending was more efficacious than any language—indeed, Fanny would have been more satisfied, had her sister expressed her disapprobation, which, from her not doing, she feared was superior to what it had ever before been. In restless disquietude she passed the night, at intervals catching a few moments of disturbed sleep. She eagerly anticipated the morning, for she still thought that Colebrook would not be able to support a continuation of forced indifference; and she was determined, contrary to her former resolution, not to be *quite* so inexorable as she had at first

first intended, but rather endeavour to conciliate, for she began to apprehend that she had gone too far. She expected that Colebrook, as was his custom, would call in the course of the ensuing day, when she hoped, by a little *judicious* manœuvring, to set all right again. She conceived a sudden and violent dislike to Captain Berresford, persuading herself that it was, in a great measure, his fault, that Colebrook was so much offended ;—she condemned him as forward and presuming, and erroneously imagined, that, if Captain Berresford had not been present, this disagreeable business would not have occurred. She appeared to have forgotten the encouragement she had given him, and which no doubt she would have given to some other, had he been absent, in order to revenge herself on Colebrook for his fancied neglect. Thus she ingeniously contrived to form excuses for herself, by attaching blame to one who, in truth, was entirely blameless.

Fanny

Fanny was the first in the breakfast-parlour, but was soon joined by her father and sister. The meal being concluded, the Colonel proposed driving over to the Hall, as etiquette required that they should pay their compliments to Lady Colebrook's friends. No pretext could be made for eluding this, though Fanny would willingly have remained at home, for she did not like going to Colebrook Hall, while things remained in their present state; and she was certain Miss Colebrook was greatly displeased with her, from the coldness with which she had behaved to her at the ball; yet, if she neglected accompanying her father and sister, she feared it would tend to widen the breach which was already made, and she therefore resolved to go with them. They accordingly set out, in a neat landau which the Colonel had got from London the preceding summer.

On reaching the Hall, they found only Lady Colebrook and Mrs. Beason to receive them ;

them ; Sir Francis was gone out with his greyhounds, and his son and daughter, with Miss Beason, had left the house with the intention of taking a long walk. Fanny felt added uneasiness, when she found that Colebrook was occupied in escorting Miss Beason.—“ So,” thought she, “ he did not mean to call on us this morning.”

She now regretted extremely having come to the Hall, and was restlessly watching her sister's eye, in order to make a signal for their departure, when Lady Colebrook exclaimed—“ There is Francis and the girls !”

Fanny looked through the window, near which she was seated, and beheld Colebrook, with a lady hanging on either arm, engaged in an apparently interesting conversation. Fanny hastily turned from the window, wishing them to imagine she did not see them ; a sickly qualm came over her.—“ Is it possible,” thought she, “ that Francis can enjoy himself, when he
knows.

knows I am displeased with him? Oh, he is indeed changed!"

These distressing ideas by no means tended to enable her to receive him as she had intended. The trio entered, and the only emotion visible in Colebrook, was a sudden flush of the face, when he first perceived who formed the party. He shook the Colonel's hand, and instantly went up to Lavinia, and spoke to her in the most cordial manner, but only bowed politely, but distantly, to Fanny. She returned his salutation, with a frigidity which she found it impossible to repel, so completely was she mortified and distressed at his demeanor.

Miss Beason seated herself by Lavinia, and, together with Colebrook, they kept up the conversation, which, though perhaps not very interesting to the two latter, appeared, to a common observer, tolerably animated. Miss Colebrook, with the good breeding she never forgot, approached

proached Fanny, when she perceived that she was sitting alone ; and though she was, in truth, seriously angry with her, she addressed her as usual, and Fanny, anxious to conceal her real feelings, replied to her with seeming gaiety. A short pause occurring, Fanny heard the voice of Colebrook addressing her sister ; from this she inferred he could not be looking towards herself ; she therefore ventured to steal a glance at him, and perceived that he looked extremely pale and dejected. Now, had she allowed nature to predominate, how could she have flown to him, and entreated him to forgive her unworthy treatment, and only assure her that she was still dear to him as ever ! This idea did occur to Fanny, and she would have given worlds at the moment, to have recalled the events of the last evening. Every time he addressed Miss Beason, she fancied his voice assumed the softened tone similar to what he had been accustomed to accost herself, when endeavouring to ingratiate himself ;
and

and she began to experience all those torturing doubts, fears, and apprehensions, inseparable from real affection, when labouring under the smallest degree of uncertainty. Miss Beason, of whose attractions she had at first sight formed so very humble an opinion, was now become an object to excite envy and jealousy.

Lavinia now proposed returning home; and after having politely declined a pressing invitation to dine, they took their leave, and were conducted to their carriage by Colebrook: it was impossible he could avoid this attention, consistent with civility. When Lavinia was seated, he presented his hand to Fanny, but in a way which plainly denoted he thought it would be refused; but this was not the case—she accepted his assistance: but how different was the manner in which he took her hand, to the affectionate fondness with which he had been wont to press it! he merely touched the tips of her trembling fingers, as she stepped into the carriage; yet Fanny could
perceive

perceive that his hand was deadly cold and clammy—a certain indication of a strong internal agitation. Colebrook bowed, and they drove off.

It was with the utmost difficulty Fanny could restrain her tears—they rose brim-full to her eyes. She was not accustomed to subdue her feelings; and nothing but the idea that her father and sister would, if acquainted with the cause of her misery, impute all the blame to herself, could have prevented her openly bewailing her extreme unhappiness.

Colonel Fairfield could not but perceive the change which had taken place in the manners of Colebrook, and he doubted not, that what he had long prophesied was come to pass, and that his young friend was at length worn out with such continual trifling. He saw that Fanny was unhappy, but he was certain, from his knowledge of Frank Colebrook's disposition and sentiments, that it must be her fault,
and

and therefore avoided augmenting her distress, by enquiring into particulars; but determined, as had always been his plan, not to interfere in the business. He did not imagine that there was an irreparable breach made between Colebrook and Fanny, and he was rather pleased to see the former assert some degree of spirit, as he thought it would be the means of making Fanny set a just estimate on the value of his affection.

Lavinia, as may be imagined, was perfectly acquainted with the whole affair, partly from her own observation, and the rest from what Colebrook had himself told her;—she was grieved to see her sister unhappy, but not so much so as to see her ridiculous. Though attached to her as sincerely as ever one being was to another, she could not help owning that she merited what she suffered, and that nothing could, in the end, prove so salutary to her as her present affliction, which she doubted

doubted not would be a warning to her for the future, and eventually be the means of securing her permanent felicity.

On their return home, they found Captain Berresford's card. They had no engagement for this evening, and the day, to Fanny, wore heavily away. She spent every moment in forming plans for her conduct when she should next meet Colebrook. She passed another restless night, and, with eager hope, welcomed the returning light.—“ Surely,” thought she, “ he must call this morning, if it is only out of ceremony.”

The weather being fine, the Colonel proposed a walk, which Lavinia immediately agreed to; but Fanny declined accompanying them. As soon as they were out of sight, she seated herself at the window, fondly hoping she should not long remain alone; she held her work in her hand, though her eyes were constantly directed to the street.

She had not sat many minutes, when she

perceived Captain Berresford approaching the house ; she was provoked at the idea of his perhaps preventing the opportunity she might have, of an explanation with Colebrook, who, she had persuaded herself, would call during the morning. It was the custom of both her sister and self to deny themselves to young gentlemen visitors, when their father was out, but Colebrook was, of course, always admitted as an exception. Fanny conceived that her father had, as usual, given instructions to this purpose, to the servants, and she hoped Captain Berresford would be prevented intruding upon her. She had retired from the window the moment she had seen him, and she trusted he had not perceived her : but she was soon convinced of her mistake—a tap at the parlour door demanded attention, and she said, “ Come in.” She had not heard the knocker of the street door, and was therefore surprised to see Captain Berresford, who, advancing with an animated air, held out his hand,

hand, as if assured he was welcome, exclaiming, at the same time—"I saw you at the window, and the door being a-jar, I let myself in;—but how is the Colonel and Miss Fairfield?—I was extremely sorry you were not at home when I called yesterday."

To all this Fanny only answered, with a reserved aspect, that her father was out; she therefoer could not ask him to sit down, but she doubted not he would meet him in the town. Captain Berresford plainly understood this to be a polite way of desiring him to retire. He was piqued at the great difference in her manner towards him, to what it had been at their former interviews, and abruptly changing his tone, he begged pardon for intruding upon her, protesting he knew not that she was alone; and wishing her good morning, he instantly quitted the house as he had entered it, without waiting for the ceremony of being attended by a domestic. Fanny was so anxious to get rid of him,

that she cared not whether he was offended or not, and she resumed her seat at the window with increased impatience.

Captain Berresford had been gone but a very short time, when she perceived Frank Colebrook, on horseback, riding slowly towards the house. Her heart beat with painful velocity—still she continued at the window, purposely that he might see her, which she thought would give him to understand that she wished him to come in. Colebrook dismounted at the door, and knocked, and Fanny waited, with tumultuous emotion, the moment of his entrance. A second time he knocked.—“It is very odd they don’t open the door!” cried Fanny to herself, half inclined to act the part of portress herself; she jumped up, and rang the bell with violence. At this instant she heard the street-door opened, and with breathless eagerness, she fixed her eyes on the door of the apartment. As the moments elapsed, her restlessness increased. “Oh, why does he not come?”

she

she mentally ejaculated. In a few minutes she heard the hall door closed, and immediately after, the sound of horse's feet receding. The blood forsook her cheeks, where, but a moment before, it seemed all to have concentrated, and a faint sickness came over her; she leaned back in her chair, and never, perhaps, was the force of sudden disappointment more keenly experienced.

A servant now entered with a card which Mr. Colebrook had left; as he laid it on the table, he said—"Mr. Colebrook, Ma'am, desired his respects to the Colonel."

"Who did he enquire for?" demanded Fanny, struggling to command her emotion.

"Mr. Colebrook asked if the Colonel and the young ladies were at home, Ma'am."

"And what did you say?" eagerly enquired Fanny.

"I said you were all out, Ma'am."

"How could you be so stupid?" cried Fanny, with an impatience she could not restrain.

The man stared, and looked half frightened; he was totally unaccustomed to find either of the young ladies irritable, and he was quite at a loss to know what he had done amiss; but resolved to exculpate himself, he said—"My master left orders, Ma'am, that I should say there was nobody at home——"

Fanny interrupted him, exclaiming—"What did Mr. Colebrook say when you told him we were all out?"

The man hesitated, and then said, as though he was afraid—"Mr. Colebrook, Ma'am—Mr. Colebrook asked if I was sure Miss Fanny was out?"

"And you said *yes*, I suppose," cried Fanny.

The man looked confused, and said—"Indeed, Ma'am, I thought I should, as my master——"

"Well, well, you may go," said Fanny;
and

and the servant instantly obeyed, very glad to make his escape.

Few things could have added more to her distress, than this unpleasant occurrence; she was convinced that Colebrook would imagine that she had desired to be denied to him, and had purposely shewn herself at the window to add to the insult. The mistake had originated in Colonel Fairfield's having neglected to tell the servant that Mr. Colebrook was not included in the general denial; and this, in truth, he had omitted through forgetfulness. With a burst of tears, Fanny sought her chamber, and there anticipated all the unpleasant consequences which might arise from this unfortunate omission. She resolved on communicating all the circumstances to Lavinia, and entreat her to explain the business to Colebrook the very first opportunity; as to speaking to him herself on the subject, she did not conceive it would be practicable, as she doubted not he would, considering himself so grossly

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insulted,

insulted, avoid her with the most studied circumspection.

When Lavinia returned, she sought her sister, who she found as before described. She was greatly alarmed on first entering her chamber, and enquired, with the deepest concern, the cause of her distress? Fanny's courage failed her, and she was half determined not to acquaint Lavinia with what had passed; for she had never openly confessed, even to *her*, how dear Colebrook was to her, and she thought it would be a tacit acknowledgment of the state of her affections, to declare the cause of her anxiety. She hesitated a few moments, while her tears continued to flow, and then said, by way of preface—"I am not very well to-day;—I fancy I am nervous, for such trifles affect me."

Here she paused.

"You relieve me infinitely," said Lavinia; "I really feared something terrible had happened."

"Oh, no!" cried Fanny, endeavouring
to

to stop her tears ; “ it is nothing very terrible—indeed it is of no consequence at all in *itself*, only I should be very sorry *any body* should imagine I wished to insult them, even if I did not care *much* for them.”

She now briefly acquainted Lavinia with what had passed, and concluded by saying —“ I am sure Francis has behaved in such a manner to me of late, that he deserves very little that I should consider his feelings in any respect.”

Lavinia was not to be imposed upon by the flimsy veil of feigned indifference with which Fanny had endeavoured to conceal the extent of her apprehensions ; her penetration immediately dived through the whole affair ; and she promised to do every thing in her power to exonerate Fanny from all imputation of blame, in the mistake of the morning.

The next day Captain Berresford called to inform them, he had that morning received advice from the admiralty, that his

ship was appointed one of the convoy for the West India fleet which was about to sail, and that in consequence, he would be relieved in a day or two by a frigate destined to succeed him on that station. The Colonel and Lavinia expressed their regret at his unexpected departure, and Fanny observed it was a very sudden order. Captain Berresford wished, as this was the last evening he would probably be able to devote to them, they would allow him to attend them to the theatre. No objection was offered, and it was agreed that Captain Berresford should dine with them; and a servant was dispatched to the play-house to procure places. Fanny thought it by no means unlikely that the Colebrook party would attend the play that evening, as it was for the benefit of a favourite performer; and she anticipated, with anxiety, the moment when Lavinia would be enabled to explain every thing to Colebrook, and perhaps bring about a reconciliation. Elated with this idea, she appeared in her usual

usual spirits; and Captain Berresford felt half inclined to forgive the coldness of her demeanor at their last *rencontre*.

Between seven and eight o'clock they proceeded to the theatre, and took possession of a front seat in the side boxes— Captain Berresford divided the sisters; and Colonel Fairfield seated himself on the other side of Lavinia. Fanny was scarcely seated, when she perceived the Colebrook party situated nearly *vis-à-vis*. The four ladies were placed in front, and Sir Francis and his son occupied the back seat. Colebrook was directly behind Miss Beason; and as he leaned forward to observe the performance, Fanny fancied he spoke to her with an air of tender interest. At one glance she perceived all this, and determined not to take a *second*, while there was a chance of being observed.

The first act was near the conclusion when they entered; and as soon as the curtain dropt, Fanny entered into a lively conversation with Captain Berresford, and

no common observer would have discovered the thorn that rankled in her heart. With Fanny, *pride* acted as a substitute for philosophy, and enabled her to conceal the emotion which her reason, unaided by the support of offended vanity, would vainly have attempted to subdue. She wished the world, nay, even her nearest relatives, to imagine that she had voluntarily discarded Mr. Colebrook, whose altered behaviour she was certain every one who knew them would observe. She dreaded lest Miss Beason should be regarded as *her* rival—a competition she conceived humiliating to the last degree; and she determined, let the consequence be what it might, to assume an appearance of indifference, from which she concluded it would naturally be inferred that she had positively rejected the poor youth, and condemned his assiduities. She *looked* at the performers, it is true, that is, when Captain Berresford ceased to speak, which was not very frequent; but as to what the actors

actors said, she was totally in the dark ; when others laughed, *she* laughed, with an air of more than usual hilarity, though she knew not the subject of their mirth ; and Captain Berresford would have conjectured that she was absent, had he not perceived a constant smile upon her countenance, from which it was natural to infer that she was highly delighted. Each time the curtain dropped, Fanny's heart beat with redoubled violence ; nor could she forbear casting a rapid glance to the opposite box, to ascertain if there was any movement which denoted an intention in one of its occupants to pay his respects in another quarter of the house. She soon recalled her wandering eyes when she perceived that all were quiet, and apparently too much engaged with each other, to think of any one else.—“ Oh ! ” thought Fanny, “ I wish I had not come to this hateful place.” She revolved in her mind what plan she should adopt, to induce her father to return to the country, where she
thought

thought she should escape the mortification she was now exposed to, by visiting public places.

The first piece being concluded, a general movement ensued—the gentlemen proceeding to pay their compliments to their female acquaintances. The Colonel and Captain Berresford quitted their station, and went to pay their *dévoirs* to Lady Colebrook and her party. As they entered the box, young Colebrook quitted it; and in a few seconds he was behind Lavinia. He bowed to Fanny with an easy politeness, which to her was a thousand times worse than the offended and restrained aspect he had worn at their last interview. So completely did this change astonish and distress her, that she returned his salutation with awkward confusion. Lavinia determined to lose no time in explaining the mistake of the preceding day, and addressed him by saying—“I was very sorry my father and myself were out yesterday when you called; but Fanny was at home, and

and would have been happy to have seen you." She paused, but Colebrook spoke not; she then continued—"Indeed, I am surprised you did not go in, as she told me you must have seen her from the window."

Colebrook hemmed, and then said, in a low voice, "I could not think of intruding myself, when the servant *informed* me that Miss Fanny was out."

"But you must have been assured of the contrary," added Lavinia; "it was merely a mistake of the man's, who supposed *you* were included in the general denial he was ordered to give to *male* visitors."

"Very probably," said Colebrook, with a sceptical look, which denoted that he still believed the offence to have been intentional on the part of Fanny.

Lavinia was vexed that he should still persist in this persuasion.—"Be assured," she continued, "I should not have undertaken to explain *this* mistake, had I not
been

been perfectly convinced that no offence whatever was intended you; and indeed," said she, lowering her voice, "Fanny was extremely hurt at the appearance of rudeness her conduct bore."

At the name of Fanny, Colebrook's eyes fell, and the blood dyed his face, which had before been unusually pale. He was silent a minute, and then said—"I am sorry your sister should have thought for a moment on so unworthy a subject; but indeed," he continued, in a sarcastic tone, while his countenance again became deadly pale, "she has *ever* shewn such studious attention in sparing my feelings on every occasion, that I can scarcely wonder at *this*."

The last words were pronounced in a tremulous accent, and a forced and sickly smile betrayed the anguish which dictated this speech. Lavinia could make no reply; she could not but acknowledge the justice of this reproach; she perceived Colebrook about to leave them, when detaining

taining him, she said, in a whisper—"Indeed, Francis, you wrong my sister much, in implicating her in the affair of yesterday. Could you see her heart, you would think and feel very differently to what you do now."

He shook his head, and kindly pressing her hand, he said—"Whatever fate I am condemned to, I shall ever remember your conduct with the warmest gratitude; and though I am forbid ever to call you by the tender name of *sister*, as I once fondly hoped I should, my affection for you can never be diminished." He spoke this in a quick and hurried tone, and instantly quitted the box.

Not one word of this dialogue, excepting her sister's whisper, had been lost on Fanny; though she kept her head turned to the opposite way, her whole attention had been absorbed in their conversation; the effect it had upon her was such, that it was with the utmost difficulty she retained even the appearance of composure. La-
vinia

vinia perceived, by the frequent fluctuation of her colour, the emotion she underwent, and immediately proposed returning home, alledging as an excuse, that she herself was tired of the performance, for she wished to spare her sister the pain of knowing she observed her disorder. To her question if she was inclined to go? Fanny faintly answered "yes." Lavinia motioned to her father, who still remained with Lady Colebrook, and he instantly obeyed the summons, together with Captain Berresford. Lavinia mentioned her wish to return home, saying she did not think the farce worth staying for.

In a few minutes they quitted the theatre—Lavinia leaning on her father's arm, and Fanny on Captain Berresford's, almost insensible of what was passing, so greatly was she agitated. At the door of the play-house stood Francis Colebrook, his back supported against a pillar, his hat was off, and his countenance, on which the
light

light of an adjacent lamp reflected, might almost have been called cadaverous. He was wiping the perspiration from his forehead, though it was a sharp frost, and consequently intensely cold. Colonel Fairfield accosted him in accents of astonishment—"Good God! Frank, what is the matter?"

Colebrook started at the voice. Not expecting that any one would be quitting the theatre so early, he had not apprehended a surprise, and was therefore greatly confused when he perceived the party near him.

"I am afraid you are very ill," continued the Colonel.

Colebrook, speaking with evident exertion, replied—"Oh no, Sir!—it is only the heat of the house."

"My dear boy, every one is complaining of the cold—you are certainly greatly indisposed—you must come home with us, and get something to relieve you."

"I thank you, but I am quite well now,"

now," added he, putting on his hat, and drawing it close over his eyes, at the same time making an effort to re-enter the theatre.

The moment Fanny had perceived him, she had involuntarily let go the arm of Captain Berresford, and continued gazing, with undisguised dismay, on the pale features of her lover; but all were too much occupied with him, to observe her emotion, and he himself did not look at her. As he would have passed to re-enter, she laid her hand impressively on his arm, and exclaimed, in a suppressed tone, "For God's sake, Francis, be persuaded—your looks are dreadful."

He started at her touch, as if electrified, and looked at her with the utmost astonishment, when suddenly turning away, and shaking her hand from his arm, he darted forward, and disappeared, in spite of Colonel Fairfield's repeated endeavours to recal him. Fanny caught her sister's arm, nor did she refuse the support of Captain Berresford

resford on the other side, for she was absolutely in need of it. Their house being but a short distance from the theatre, they walked to it. On reaching it, Fanny complained of a violent headache, and immediately retired.

How she passed that night, it is unnecessary to describe; suffice it to say, her pillow, steeped in tears, was pressed in vain! or if, for a moment, she lost the consciousness of her wretchedness, the ghostly image of her lover seemed to stand before her, reproaching her for her barbarity.

CHAP. XVIII.

Now, borne by hope, her spirits bound in air,
Now, chill'd by doubt, she sinks into despair!

E. P.

THE circumstances that dwelt heaviest on Fanny's heart were, first, the expression Colebrook had made use of, in addressing Lavinia. He had said—"he should never call her by the tender name of sister." Alas, alas! he had then entirely relinquished all thought of a union with *her*:—secondly, he had, in a manner which she imputed to disgust, shaken her hand from his arm, and remained deaf to the entreaties of her, who, but a short time before, had

had commanded him with a look.—“He may break my heart,” sobbed Fanny; “but at least he shall not know he did it!” Thus she rose from her couch, more than ever resolved to conceal the agony she really endured.

The agitation of her spirits had brought on a slow nervous fever, which wholly deprived her of appetite, and she was, in truth, indisposed both in body and mind. In the course of the morning, Captain Berresford called to take leave, and departed, with the good wishes of the Colonel and Lavinia, and *benediction* of Fanny, with a wish that he might never suffer more than he had been the cause of making her endure; thus erroneously imputing to him great part of her unhappiness. Lady Colebrook, her daughter, and Mrs. and Miss Beason, also paid them a visit on this day; but they were unattended by the gentlemen, and nothing particular arose from this call.

Fanny passed two more joyless days and
restless

restless nights ; the third brought round the weekly assembly, and just made seven days that she had been in a constant state of disquietude. She resolved on not going to the ball, where she was certain she should meet with nothing but mortification ; but she did not mention her intention, as she wished that her father and sister should attend it ; but she determined, when the time came, to decline going, on the plea of indisposition, which indeed she might do, without doing violence to veracity, for her health was greatly impaired, from the constant anxiety of her mind. Before her father she still kept up the semblance of gaiety, but this could not prevent his observing that she could not eat ; and he also perceived, with uneasiness, that the roses on her cheek were fading. To all his tender enquiries respecting her health, she resolutely continued to protest that she was quite well, and imputed her want of appetite to the town air, to which she was not accustomed. As she was more

frequently with Lavinia, she could not disguise the anguish she endured; and her affectionate sister perceived, with acute uneasiness, that she suffered under a considerable degree of mental pain. She was not at a loss to guess the cause, and she began seriously to consider what would be the most advisable measures to adopt, in order to effect an entire accommodation, between two beings whom she was well assured were mutually wretched.

Lavinia was distressed, from various causes, at the present epoch. She was in daily expectation, and had been some time, of hearing from Berresford, or at least receiving some intelligence of the expedition, which, from the length of time it had sailed, might reasonably be expected. She trembled with apprehension, when the servant laid the daily paper on the breakfast-table; and often was compelled to defer looking at it, until she was convinced, by her father's countenance, who always took it up when he observed that she de-

...murred, that there was no intelligence of the expedition. She longed to return to the country, in the solitude of which she fancied she could await, with less impatience, the termination of her torturing doubts; and there, she thought, she should be able to prepare herself for whatever fate might await her. Frequently, when surrounded by a crowd, a chilling horror would spread itself over her, at the dreadful idea, that she was ignorant, at that moment, whether she dared reckon her Edward among the living;—

With shew of hate,

Thus oft kind Mercy, mark'd in Anger's guise,

Smites whom she loves*.

On the morning of the ball, Lavinia received a note from Lady Colebrook, in which was contained an invitation for the Colonel, herself, and sister, to a *fête*, to be given at Colebrook Hall on that day week. Lady Colebrook farther added, that it was her intention, with her friends,

* Wrangham.

to

to attend the assembly that evening, where she hoped to have the pleasure of meeting them. Lavinia returned an affirmative answer to both these particulars.

When Lavinia was prepared for the ball in the evening, she was surprised, on entering the drawing-room, to perceive that Fanny had not changed her dress, for she had imagined, as they had separate apartments, that Fanny had been adornizing at the same time as herself. On interrogating her, Fanny replied, that she felt too unwell to go into public.

"I had not the most remote idea that you did not intend going," cried Lavinia; "surely you do not imagine I will leave you thus."

"Oh! I am not seriously ill, only a trifling head-ach, and it would be useless your staying at home, for I shall go to bed as soon as you are gone.—Indeed, Lavinia," added she, with energy, "you will oblige me much by going—I would much rather you would."

Lavinia now began to suspect that Fanny had some particular motive for this resolution; probably she might think it would be the means of interesting Colebrook, who she conceived would be concerned for her health, when he learned that indisposition had prevented her being at the ball. Lavinia was right in this conclusion, and she speedily resolved not to interrupt this little *finesse* of her sister's, and therefore no longer persisted in staying with her.

Colonel Fairfield had dined with a party of gentlemen, but had promised to return to escort his daughters to the ball. About nine o'clock, he entered, and was much surprised at Fanny's determination, and evinced great uneasiness when she pleaded illness as the cause.—“Indeed, my love, I must take you back to the country, if you do not get better—I don't think you have been well since you have been here.”

“I am ready to go as soon as you please,”

please," replied Fanny; "indeed I am quite tired of L——."

"So soon, Fanny?"

"Oh, yes! I was always happy at Fairfield."

"And are you *not* so now, my love?" demanded her father, in a voice of concern.

"Oh, yes, quite happy!" retorted Fanny, with quickness, and deeply colouring; "only Fairfield is my *home* you know, and of course I prefer it."

The Colonel smiled, and shook his head. He perceived that she had unintentionally betrayed the unhappiness she wished to conceal, and he was certain it was connected with Colebrook; but that Fanny was to blame, he could not doubt; yet he felt as a father, and though he was sensible she merited what she endured, he could not bear to see her suffer. He had ever avoided interfering, and he wished to do so still; but he determined to enquire of Lavinia, the first opportunity, if she was acquainted

with the cause of the coldness between her sister and Frank Colebrook; and he resolved then, if it were possible, with propriety, to do what he could to forward their mutual felicity.

Fanny, when left to herself, gave way to all the weakness that oppressed her. She, who had been so passionately fond of shining in public, had now voluntarily declined joining the merry throng!—What a revolution had taken place in her breast, in the space of one short week!—What would she have given, could she, prior to that period, have penetrated into futurity! when, by adopting a different mode of conduct, and by timely circumspection, she might have prevented the sad consequences arising from her folly and imprudence.

One part, one little part, we dimly scan,
Through the dark medium of life's fev'rish dream,
Yet dare arraign the whole stupendous plan,
If but that little part incongruous seem:

Noe

Nor is that part, perhaps, what mortals deem ;
Oft, from apparent ills, our blessings rise.
Oh ! then renounce that impious self-esteem,
That aims to trace the secrets of the skies,
For thou art but of dust ! be humble and be wise*.

Fanny continued, for near an hour, pacing the room, in disorder, and tracing each step with her tears ; at length, completely exhausted, and feeling herself extremely indisposed, she took up a light, and quitted the apartment, to repair to her chamber, where she hoped to obtain a temporary oblivion of her sorrows in repose.

As she was crossing the gallery which led to her apartment, she heard a gentle rap at the street-door. She leaned over the banisters, to listen who it could be at so late an hour. The door was opened, and she heard the familiar tones of a voice, which vibrated to every nerve, demand, in a suppressed accent, as if afraid of being overheard—"How is Miss Fanny now?"

The servant did not immediately answer,

* Beattie's "*Minstrel*."

but shortly exclaimed—"Indeed, Sir, I don't know, but I'll go and enquire."

"Stop, stop!" cried Colebrook, with quickness; "do not say I am here—can you not ask her maid how she is?"

"Yes, certainly, Sir; I'll go and ask Mary directly.—Pray walk into the parlour, Sir," continued the valet, who was the Colonel's own man, and from the length of years he had lived in the family, was perfectly acquainted, by observation, with the principal circumstances which concerned each individual of it.

Fanny, with breathless agitation, had listened to every word—"Hope, with uplifted wing," flew triumphant to her breast. "Oh!" thought she, "he still comes for me—he is still anxious for my welfare!" She heard him enter the parlour; for a moment she stood irresolute.—Should she go down, and enter the parlour as if by accident, and ignorant of his being there, by so doing, an interview must inevitably ensue, which would, she imagined, put an
end,

end, one way or other, to her torturing doubts. She called to mind the anguish she had endured for some days, and it determined her at once. With tottering steps, and throbbing temples, she descended the stairs; she dared not hesitate; had she one moment permitted herself to pause, she would have found herself incapable of confronting Colebrook in this unexpected manner. The parlour door was open, and Colebrook was standing exactly opposite, with his eyes fixed upon it, impatiently awaiting the return of William:

On first perceiving a female approaching, he imagined it to be the *femme de chambre*; but how impossible to pourtray the confusion that overwhelmed him, when Fanny entered, exclaiming, with pretended surprise, "Mr. Colebrook! is it possible!" The last words she pronounced with difficulty, and sinking on the first chair she came to; she gasped for breath. The sight of her agitation, in some measure,

aroused Colebrook from the panic which had struck him on the first sight of her, and advancing towards the door, he stopped, and said, in almost inarticulate accents—
“ I beg pardon—I had not the most distant idea of seeing you here, having been informed you were very ill ; but I will no longer intrude.”

With these words he was about to quit the room, when Fanny *motioned* him to stop, for she was unable to speak, and was apprehensive of fainting. Colebrook perceived her turn extremely pale, and unconsciously advanced a few steps towards her ; then making a sudden stop, he said—
“ Shall I send your maid to you ? ”

Fanny answered not, but hid her face with her hands. Colebrook trembled universally, and involuntarily clasping his hands together, he threw himself on a seat, and fixed his eyes on Fanny, while an expression of anguish and despair marked his features. Fanny uncovered her face, and made an ineffectual effort to
speak,

she speak, and raising her eyes, they met those of the unhappy young man, denoting the emotion before described; she regarded him for a moment, then turning away, she burst into tears. Colebrook started up, exclaiming—"My God, this is too much!" and flying to the door, he would have quitted the room, had not Fanny sobbed out—"Stop, Francis, for Heaven's sake!"

"I can be of no use to you," cried he, in hurried accents; "you are in need of assistance—I will send your servant to you."

With these words he flew out of the apartment. In the hall he met William, to whom he said, though so inarticulately as to be obliged to repeat it twice, before he could be understood—"Send Mary to her mistress directly." He then, without demur, quitted the house.

Lorsque par les rebuts une âme est détachée,
Elle veut fuir l'objet dont elle fut touchée,
Et ne rompt point sa chaîne avec si peu d'éclat.
Qu'elle puisse rester en un paisible état!

* Molière.

P. G.

When

When Mary entered the parlour, she found her mistress nearly insensible, though she still retained her seat. A glass of water so far restored her, as to enable her to reach her chamber. Mary, the most attached and faithful creature, assisted her into bed, and then prepared a draught, which she prevailed on her to take, and which, in spite of the corroding thoughts which assailed her, soon threw her into a gentle sleep. This timely preventative probably saved her from a severe fit of illness, which is frequently the consequence of such extreme agitation.

When William had quitted Mr. Colebrook, to obtain information respecting the health of his young lady, he had sought her maid, who was much surprised when he made a serious enquiry for Miss Fanny, as she had not heard that she was indisposed ; she therefore answered William by saying, she believed Miss Fanny was tolerably well, as she had not heard her complain. William returned to communicate

this intelligence to Mr. Colebrook, when he heard his young lady's voice from the parlour, and he very judiciously determined not to interrupt them.

The Colonel or Lavinia heard nothing of Colebrook's visit, and as Fanny desired the servants not to mention her having been unwell, for fear of alarming them, they continued ignorant of the event. Fanny joined them at breakfast, without any change having taken place in her outward appearance. The draught she had taken had greatly restored her; and it was difficult to determine whether her uneasiness was augmented or decreased by the interview of the preceding night. A dawn of hope irradiated her mind, when she reflected that Colebrook must certainly have come to the house purposely to enquire after her; and she began to imagine that there must be some greater cause for his cruel behaviour, than the simple circumstances which had occurred on the fatal night of the ball. She amused herself
with

with fancying that some mystery enveloped her, which would doubtless be ultimately elucidated. Though he had persisted in quitting her, the anguish displayed on his countenance was evidence of the struggle he underwent; and Fanny still flattered herself she possessed his heart. She entertained her imagination with the anticipation of the *fête* which was to take place at the Hall, and looked forward to that period, as the æra which was to terminate her misery. Thus does the human mind ever ingeniously extract comfort for itself! Those very circumstances which, to an unclouded judgment, would have been evidence of a diminution of affection, Fanny blindly considered in the light she most wished them to appear.

Feré libenter homines id quod voluit credunt !

In the course of the morning, Fanny enquired of Lavinia, with assumed carelessness—"If Francis Colebrook was at the ball?"

Lavinia.

Lavinia answered that—"He was, and danced the first set with Miss Beason ; after which he had quitted the room, and did not appear again, until a short time before they had returned home. Indeed," continued Lavinia, " he looked wretchedly."

Fanny made no comments, and the subject was dropped.



CHAP. XIX.

Why dost thou groan? why beat thy sounding breast?

Why is this wild fantastic grief express'd?

LUCAN'S *Pharsalia*.

THE first time Colonel Fairfield found himself *tête-à-tête* with Lavinia, he asked if she was acquainted with the cause of the coldness existing between her sister and Frank Colebrook? Lavinia did not immediately reply—she was at a loss what to say, being unwilling to declare what she knew, as she was aware it would draw the displeasure of her father upon Fanny. The Colonel, observing her hesitate, continued—“If you feel any reluctance, Lavinia,

vinia, to acquaint me with what you know of the business, I will not distress you by requiring it; for I have that opinion of your judgment, that if you do not think it necessary that I should be informed, I am perfectly satisfied to remain in ignorance. I made the enquiry, merely that I might discover whether my interference could be of any use."

"I believe," replied Lavinia, "that the misunderstanding originated in a trifle, and I trust it will shortly be accommodated, without the necessity of you, my dear father, troubling yourself on the subject."

The Colonel enquired no farther; he perceived that Lavinia did not wish to acquaint him with the particulars, and he was certain, had it been advisable that he should know, she would not have hesitated a moment to inform him. From this he doubted not that Fanny had been greatly to blame, and that Lavinia, on that account, had avoided expatiating on the subject; he was glad that she had acted thus,
for

for he liked not to hear any thing which could depreciate Fanny in his eyes.

He perceived that both his daughters seemed heartily tired of L——, and he proposed to them to leave it, sooner than was at first intended, to which they both joyfully assented; and it was agreed that they should sleep at Fairfield the night of the *fête* at Colebrook Hall.

Fanny passed two more days, alternately elevated by hope, and depressed with despair; on the third, she was standing with her back to the window, when turning at the sound of horses' feet, she beheld Miss Beason, attended by young Colebrook, on horseback, followed by a groom. Colebrook cast a glance towards the window, but the moment he perceived Fanny, he withdrew his eyes, and addressed Miss Beason, as if in continuation of a subject he had before been speaking on. This circumstance, trifling as it was, was sufficient to alarm all Fanny's fears, and she again sunk a prey to the most torturing doubts.

Three

Three days only intervened before the *fête* was to take place; at one moment, Fanny resolved she would not go; and the next, she determined, let the consequence be what it would, not to relinquish this opportunity of ascertaining, by the most scrupulous observation, the real state of Colebrook's sentiments. Thus fluctuating and irresolute, she passed the intervening time, without having heard or seen any thing of the Colebrook family.

The day at length arrived, and it being their intention to sleep at home that night, Colonel Fairfield proposed riding over, the weather being propitious, in order to make some necessary arrangements. Fanny declined being of the party, having some preparation to make for her dress in the evening.

Breakfast being concluded, about ten o'clock the Colonel and Lavinia set out on horseback. Fanny continued in the parlour, and insensibly fell into a reverie as to what *might* or what *might not* occur in

in the course of the evening. She was aroused from her cogitations by a loud peal from the bells of the neighbouring church. The first idea that struck her was, that intelligence had been received of the success of the expedition, and she instantly rang the bell to make enquiries.

The summons was answered by a woman who had taken care of the house before Colonel Fairfield had occupied it, and had been retained in the service of the family, for the short time they had been at L——. The moment she entered, Fanny exclaimed, with quickness—"Do you know what the bells are ringing for, Jane?"

"La, Miss, to be sure I do! Dear me—I thought you had known, Miss, 'or I should have *com'd* and told you."

"Well, well, tell me now."

"Why dear me, Miss, hav'nt you heard of the wedding?"

"Wedding?" repeated Fanny, in a disappointed tone, "*only* a wedding."

"Yes,

"Yes, Miss," continued the woman; "the wedding has happened this morning at Colebrook Hall."

Fanny started at the mention of Colebrook Hall, but immediately resumed her accustomed composure, and said, with indifference—"One of the servants, I suppose?"

"Dear me, no, Miss; it was young Mr. Colebrook himself——"

The woman was going on with her speech, but was, for a moment, struck dumb by the astonishment she beheld depicted on the features of her auditor; and feeling proud of having it in her power to communicate intelligence so interesting, she continued, in a voice of glee—"Yes indeed, Miss! Mr. Colebrook was married this morning to the young lady *as* has been staying there."

Fanny stared at the woman as she would have regarded a person whom she imagined to be insane; but the deadly
paleness

paleness which spread itself over her face, denoted that she was not quite confident that what she heard was false. Recovering herself a little, she cried, in a voice of incredulity—"My good woman, you must have been misinformed—who could have told you such nonsense?"

"Nonsense!" re-echoed the woman, with a mortified air; "indeed, Miss, it is no *nonsense* at all; for it was William, the Colonel's own man, that told me so; and I am sure William *must* know."

"William told you!" cried Fanny, almost breathless; "send him here instantly."

To describe this unfortunate girl's sensations while awaiting the confirmation of this intelligence, would be impossible—never were the horrors of suspense productive of greater agony. William entered; his face looked very long, and he silently awaited to be interrogated. One glimpse of his countenance was sufficient to annihilate

late

late hope, and, with the utmost difficulty, Fanny, in a choaked voice, articulated—
“Is this true?”

William perfectly understood her, and in a melancholy tone, he returned—“Too true, indeed, Ma'am; Mr. Colebrook was married this morning to Miss Beason, and they are just gone through in their carriage. I saw Mr. Colebrook myself; he looked up as he passed; I am sure I wonder how he *could*, for my part.”

William paused, but Fanny continued gazing on him, as if expecting him to say more:—he went on—

“Mr. Colebrook's valet told me all about it himself, for he was following the carriage, but stopped here to leave a great lump of bride-cake, but I did not like to bring it in, so I left it in the hall.” William sighed, and continued—“I could not help saying to John, ‘Why, John,’ says I, ‘I could not believe the ringers, when they told me of this wedding; and I would not believe it now, if I did not see you myself.’”

her tottering limbs could support her, she sought her chamber, and locking the door, she resigned herself to the contemplation of her woe. In proportion as each circumstance recurred, her self-condemnation increased—"My God, forgive me!" she cried; "what have I not to answer for! I have driven him I doted on into the arms of another, whom he does not—no, I am sure he cannot love! No, no; it is evident he has married through pique, and whatever wretchedness he has entailed upon us both, it is I alone who am to blame!"

In anguish surpassing description, she threw herself on the bed. Upon farther reflection, she doubted not that Sir Francis and Lady Colebrook had persuaded their son to take this step, for she was certain he never could have determined upon it, but through their instigation—"Yes," cried she, "*their* pride was mortified; *they* hate me, and this *fête*, this horrible *fête*, is given in honour of this luckless union; and I was invited to it, to be tortured, that they might witness

witness my anguish and disappointment.—

But no, I will not go; that satisfaction at least I will deprive them of. Oh, Francis! it is only two short weeks since you told me, that if I refused your hand, it should never be another's—Oh, faithless and unjust! Yes, yes, he shook my hand from him; and did he not leave me in sickness and in tears?"

Thus did she pass the miserable hours in unavailing complaints. Her father and sister, she was certain, were as ignorant as herself that this union was in contemplation; and she doubted not that they would be equally amazed at it. She was convinced they would be informed of it before their return, and how to meet them she knew not; for though she could confine herself to her chamber, on the plea of indisposition, she was aware that they would ascribe it to the true cause; and here her pride interfered. She could not bear the supposition that she should be regretting a man who had forsaken her. She had endeavoured to impress the world with an idea that she had

rejected him ; and if she now yielded to the affliction which assailed her, every one would imagine she had been neglected, and rivalled by Miss Beason—*Rivalled* by Miss Beason ! this thought aroused every spark of spirit she possessed—“ No, no ; that shall never be said ! ” cried the wretched girl ; “ cost me what it will, I will this very night convince every one that I was perfectly indifferent to Colebrook, and that I voluntarily resigned him. I will go to the Hall, and, if I die in the effort, I will so far controul my feelings, as to prevent even that inhuman Lady Colebrook from knowing my real sensations.”

Once determined on this plan, she endeavoured to calm the violence of her emotions, which she feared would disorder her too much, to permit her to appear abroad in the evening.

The dinner-hour was past before the Colonel and Lavinia returned. Fanny was summoned to dine. She sent word that she had a trifling head-ach, and wished to nurse herself, in order to enable her to

go out in the evening. This message brought Lavinia instantly to her bedside, on which she still reclined. Fanny kept her back towards her sister, who approached, and taking her hand, pressed it with fervency. Fanny could scarcely contain herself,

"I fear," exclaimed Lavinia, "you are more seriously indisposed than you will acknowledge. Surely you had better not think of going out to-night. I will remain with you, and my father will make our excuses."

"Mention it not," interrupted Fanny; "I am determined to go; my resolution is fixed."

Having said this, in a half-whisper, she concealed her face in the bed-clothes. Her sister tenderly requested she would take something; but Fanny said she could not eat, and only wished to be left alone. Lavinia perceiving her presence only distressed her, quitted her, but returned when dinner was over, with a glass of wine and a biscuit, which she prevailed on her to take.

Her dinner had been sent up to her, but it remained untouched.

At seven o'clock, Fanny rose, and summoned Mary to attend at her toilet; which was absolutely necessary, for she was in fact too ill to assist herself. On rising from her bed, her head went round, and for a few minutes she thought she should have been obliged to return to it. She desired Mary to get her some drops of a restorative nature; and having swallowed them, she recovered herself considerably. She bathed her eyes several times in cold water; but, in spite of all her efforts, she looked totally unlike herself. Her face was pale and naggard, her eyes red and sunken, and her whole appearance at once betrayed that she was indisposed, both in body and mind.

About eight o'clock, the carriage was at the door, which was to convey them to Colebrook Hall; and a gentle rap at Fanny's door was followed by a summons from her sister to join them. Fanny inquired if they were quite ready? and being answered in

in the affirmative, she descended the stairs, and proceeded straight to the carriage, without entering the parlour, where her father waited for her. She was immediately followed by him and her sister.

Dreadful were Fanny's sensations during the drive. The image of Francis Colebrook was perpetually presenting itself. She was going to that house to which he had so often welcomed her; she was going there to celebrate his nuptials with another. In spite of all her efforts, these wretched ideas obtruded, and she was frequently obliged to have recourse to her smelling-bottle, which she had brought with her, apprehending her feelings might overcome her. The Colonel and Lavinia were silent during the drive; and Fanny felt obliged by their taciturnity—"Alas," thought she, "what can they say on the subject! They would not be so barbarous as to tell me it is my own fault, though I know they think so. Their behaviour is tender and delicate, as it always is."

On approaching the Hall, they perceived

it was brilliantly illuminated ; and, the weather being propitious, a grand display of fire-works was exhibited, to amuse the guests, as they advanced nearer. It was some time before Colonel Fairfield's carriage could gain the grand entrance to the Hall, for the multiplicity of equipages which impeded the way. The confusion of the scene proved beneficial to Fanny, who had not leisure to dwell at that moment on the weight of her misery. On descending from the carriage, the Colonel, giving an arm to each of his daughters, proceeded to the saloon, where Lady Colebrook and Mrs. Beason, who still continued her guest, were receiving the congratulations of the surrounding company. The din of these complimentary speeches saluted the unhappy Fanny the moment she entered. The hideous roaring of the most horrible monster, the appalling yell of the wildest savage, could not have dismayed her more. She suddenly dropped the arm of her father, and hastened to a seat, resolved not to approach nearer to Lady Colebrook ;

Colebrook ; and indeed she was incapable of addressing her in the mode which others adopted. Colonel Fairfield looked after her, but did not attempt to stop her ; and he proceeded with Lavinia to pay his compliments to Lady Colebrook and Mrs. Beason.

Fanny found herself seated next a lady who was wholly unknown to her ; at which she rejoiced, as it rendered all conversation unnecessary. The first thing she perceived, exactly opposite to her, was a large transparency, in which was displayed Cupid presiding at the altar of Hymen, which was surrounded by innumerable allegorical representations, all connected with the same subject. Fanny shuddered at the sight, and precipitately cast her eyes another way ; but, alas ! wherever they rested, similar objects saluted them. The whole apartment was decorated in the same style, and each domestic wore a large white bow at his breast. From this moment, a complete stupefaction took possession of her senses. She was almost insensible to the surrounding

ing scene ; and had any one addressed her, she would in all probability have been incapable of answering. Half an hour elapsed, when a servant approached with tea and coffee. Fanny mechanically took a cup of the latter ; this had a wonderful effect upon her, and restored her to the full use of her faculties ; but whether this was fortunate or not, the event will prove. With returning animation came a full conviction of her exact situation. She seemed for the first time to be fully awake to a sense of the extent of her misery. Francis Colebrook was the *husband* of another. It was now even a crime to think of him. She should never, never see him again—she dared not wish it. A faint sickness came over her, her sight became obscured, and she had just sufficient power remaining to totter to the door, which she was very near. She reached the outside, when the less obstructed air a little revived her, and enabled her to recollect herself. She was now convinced it would be impossible for her to retain her composure, and that it was vain to think
of

of returning to the saloon. She was at this moment so much disordered, as to be unable to support herself. She therefore resolved to seek Miss Colebrook's *boudoir*, where she imagined she was certain of remaining undisturbed, and to continue there until she was capable of re-appearing. With eleven steps she crossed the gallery, and reached the *boudoir*. The sight of a bright fire discovered to her that it was unoccupied, and entering, she shut the door, and throwing herself on a sofa, gave vent to the agony she endured, in a torrent of tears. Her spirit was completely subdued. She felt as if forsaken by the whole world; and she experienced that desolate sensation, not unmingled with awe, which is so frequently produced by indisposition. She trembled at being alone, and looked round her with fearful apprehension—"Ah, Heaven," she cried, "I might expire here, unaided and alone! Lavinia, where are you? Can you too forsake me?"

Nothing but the inundation of tears she shed could have prevented her fainting.

Her

Her senses were considerably affected, which, together with the solitude of the scene, made her imagine herself much worse than she really was. She even fancied she was dying. She would have given worlds to have thrown herself upon the affectionate bosom of her sister, and confess all her weakness. She felt incapable of longer concealing her anguish, and careless of the opinion of the whole world combined. Every spark of pride in her breast was extinguished. She felt herself a miserable wretch, and her only wish was to hear the sympathising accents of her sister—"Surely," thought she, "Lavinia will seek me, when she perceives I have quitted the saloon."

She resolved, if she did not speedily appear, to ring the bell, and send a servant to request she would come to her.

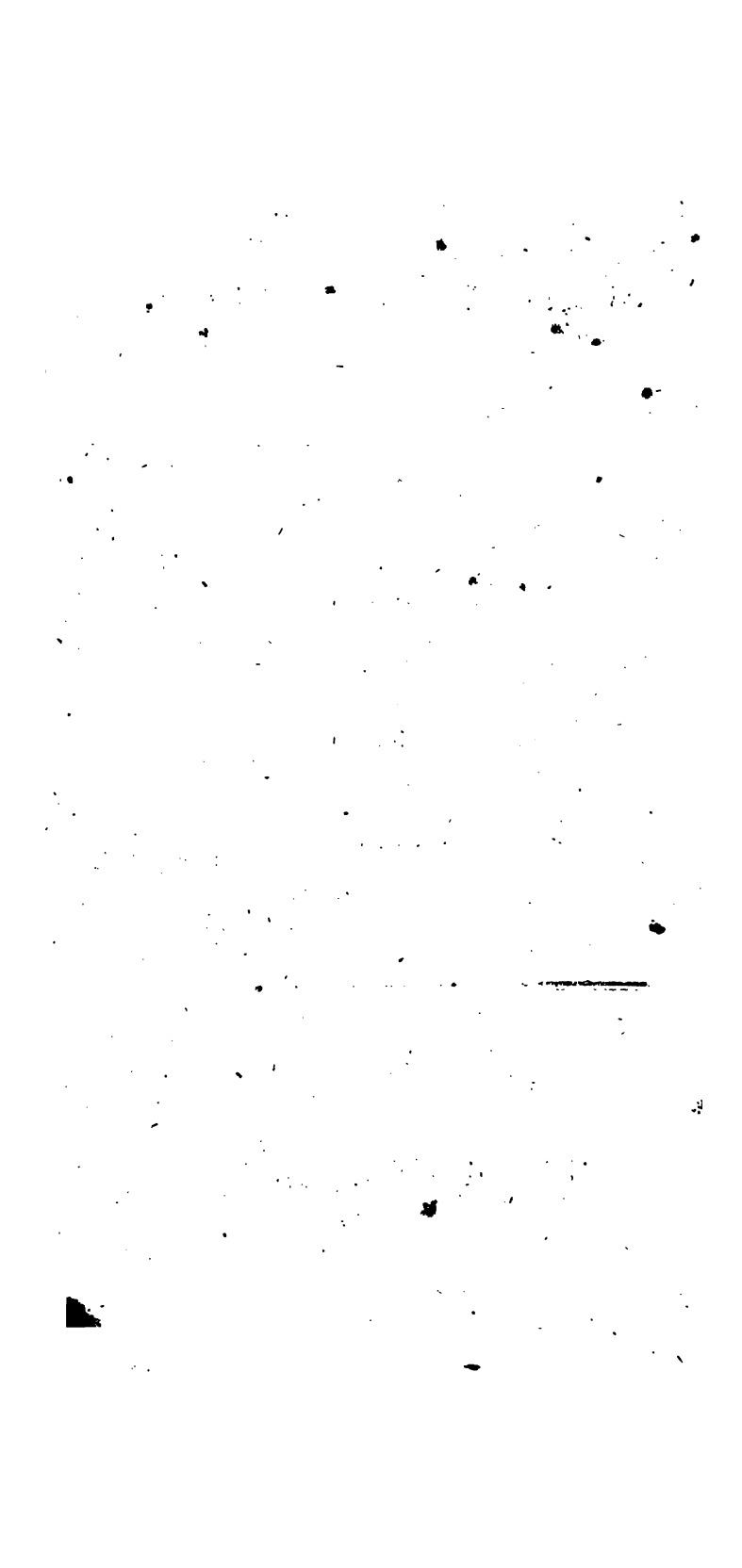
END OF VOL. I.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

SOLDIER'S OFFSPRING.

A TALE.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.



SOLDIER'S OFFSPRING;

OR,

THE SISTERS.

A Tale.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

BY

EMMA DE LISLE.

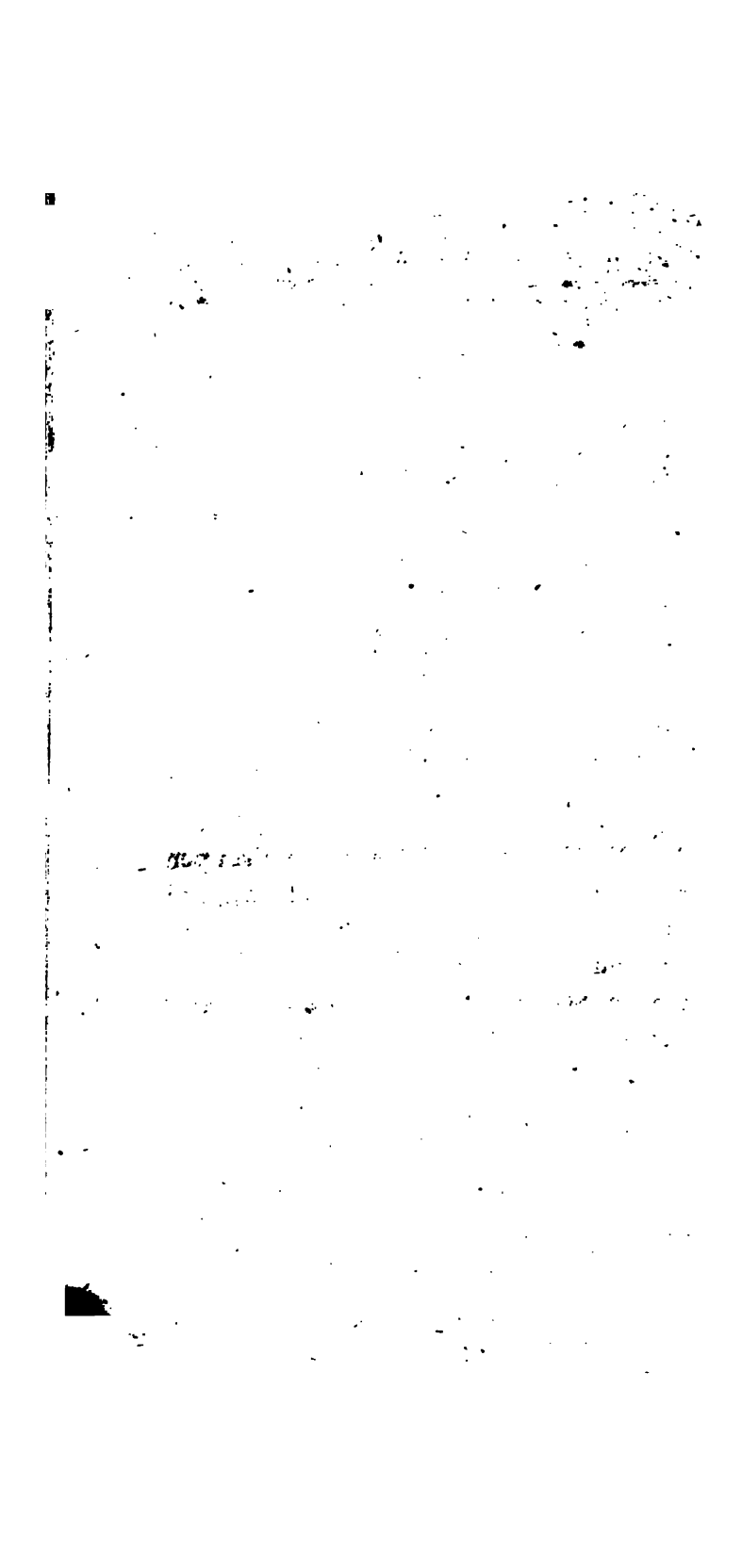
And while each turn of passion I pursue,
Ask thy own heart if what I tell be true.

LYTTLETON.

VOL. II.



LONDON;
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Press,
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.
(Successors to Lane, Newman, and Co.)
LEADENHALL-STREET.
1810.





SOLDIER'S OFFSPRING.

CHAP. I.

A spirit bending from the bursting cloud,
Beheld and pitied her!—————

E. P.

FANNY had not been more than ten minutes in the *boudoir*, which she imagined half an hour, when she heard steps approaching, and the voice of her sister saying—"She must be in the *boudoir*!" this was shortly followed by a gentle tap at the door.

Fanny, in a faint voice, cried—"Come in," and hid her face in her handkerchief,

to conceal the disorder of her looks, and, extending her hand, she exclaimed, in accents interrupted by sobs—"I thought you too had forsaken me. Oh Lavinia, I am very ill!"

Her hand was received and tenderly pressed.—Fanny suddenly withdrew the handkerchief from her face, for she felt that it was not Lavinia's hand. For an instant she gazed, while her eyes projected beyond their natural limits, when, uttering a piercing and reiterated shriek, she fell back on the sofa, and was insensible for a few minutes.

The enthusiastic expressions of **empathioned affection**, pronounced by the voice of Francis Colebrook, aroused Fanny from the temporary torpor the sight of him produced. The idea of the insult that was offered her, by his presuming to address her in the language of love, at once restored to her the use of all her faculties. She attempted to rise, but finding she was incapable of supporting herself, she turned

ed on Colebrook a commanding look, and said, in a firm tone—"Leave me this moment, Sir!"

"I see," cried Colebrook, in the most despairing accent, "I have offended you beyond all hope of pardon—but I cannot, will not leave you until I have explained."

Fanny would not allow him to proceed, but interrupted him, exclaiming, in an authoritative tone—"I insist upon your quitting me instantly, Mr. Colebrook!"

"No, no! never, never will I quit you," cried the unhappy young man, throwing himself on his knees before her, "until you have pronounced my doom!—either banish me for ever from your sight, or tell me I may still hope to be forgiven!"

For a few moments, amazement at this audacious behaviour struck Fanny dumb, when, making a violent effort, she rose from the sofa, exclaiming—"Oh God! how am I sunk, to be subject to be thus insulted! How dare you, Sir, address me

in such language, when you this very day swore eternal fidelity to another at the sacred altar, and in the presence of your Creator?" Having said this, she sunk again upon the sofa, her trembling limbs refusing to support her.

Colebrook still retained his humble attitude, while he gazed upon her with a look of the deepest affliction, and uttered, in sorrowful accents—"Ah! my Fanny, some horrible delirium bewilders your senses! I never vowed constancy to any but you, nor ever will!"

"Are you not married?" cried Fanny, almost breathless.

"Married! my dearest love, what is it you mean?" exclaimed Colebrook, springing on his feet, and catching one of her hands.

"Not married!" screamed Fanny; "not married this morning to Miss Beason!"

"No! by all my hopes of eternity, I am not married—and never will I marry any but yourself!"

Fanny

Fanny still regarded him with breathless astonishment and expectation, while the prevalence of hope over despair strongly marked her features. Colebrook continued, throwing himself beside her—"How could you, for a moment, imagine I was married to Miss Beason?—she was this morning united to my cousin Marlow, to whom she has been engaged for some time—I accompanied them the first stage on their journey, at his request."

All vestige of sorrow now wholly forsook the countenance of the delighted Fanny, and was succeeded by an expression of the most supreme felicity. Fixing her eyes upon the face of her lover, with a look of undisguised fondness, she exclaimed, in a voice almost suffocated by emotion—"Then you are still mine?" and, throwing her arms about his neck, she burst into tears.

Colebrook clasped her to his throbbing breast, with an ardency that denoted the extacy of his feelings. Never before had

he experienced such transport—he saw, he felt that Fanny loved him tenderly—sincerely loved him—he was assured of it, beyond all possibility of doubt!

CHAP. II.

But Fortune stay'd her short displeasure here,
Nor urg'd her minion with too long a fear!

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

It was many minutes before either could recover sufficient composure to speak intelligibly; at length Colebrook again expressed his astonishment, how this mistake could have originated. Fanny then informed him of what William had told her. The channel through which he had first heard the intelligence, was certainly rather questionable; nor was it unnatural that the ringers should conclude that
young

young Mr. Colebrook was the bridegroom, when they heard that a wedding had taken place at Colebrook Hall. This was in fact the case—one of the ringers, who had not curiosity enough to enquire into the particulars, had asserted to William (merely from his own conclusions), that Mr. Colebrook was married to the young lady who had been staying at the Hall. Both Fanny and Colebrook easily conceived, that a mistake might have originated in the way above described, as more extraordinary reports have frequently been spread upon a much slighter foundation — “But how,” exclaimed Fanny, “could William have so completely misinterpreted his conversation with your servant John?” She now, as nearly as she could recollect (and indeed the dreadful words seemed yet vibrating on her ear) related the dialogue which had past between the two domestics, omitting only that part which alluded to a match being

B 4

expected.

expected to take place between Mr. Colebrook and herself.

Colebrook listened attentively, and when she had concluded, said, "I see exactly how this misconception has occurred.—On recalling the words of John, you may perceive there was nothing erroneous conveyed in them, since he said he saw me buy the ring, and so he did—for, at my cousin's particular request, I went to L—— yesterday morning to purchase it for him—but mark, John did not say it was for myself; on the contrary, he said I looked very unlike a man that was going to be married—again, he said that the wedding was unexpected; and so I suppose it might be among the servants, for my cousin only arrived three days ago, having been detained in London by the dilatoriness of his solicitor. Observe, my love, no names were mentioned; and though this was merely the effects of chance, it was the means of deceiving poor William,

William, who was prepossessed with a conviction that it was *I* who was married."

"Good Heavens!" cried Fanny, "how wonderfully have fortuitous circumstances combined to deceive me!"

"Still," said Colebrook, "I cannot imagine, my Fanny, how you could have past the whole day without discovering your mistake."

"That is easily accounted for," returned Fanny, casting down her eyes; "for I was in my chamber all day, nor would I permit any one to come near me; indeed, my father and Lavinia were out during the morning; and as to the servants, they were as ignorant of the truth as myself. Lavinia came to me for a few minutes; and so convinced was I of the certainty of what I had heard, that I fancied I could perceive in her manner, and also in my father's (during our drive here), a tender indication of their participation in my sensations."

Colebrook warmly expressed his gratitude

tude for her candour, in no longer disguising the interest she felt for him—
“And is it possible,” continued he, “that you had no suspicion of the truth, even when you entered the house?”

“On the contrary,” replied Fanny, “every thing I saw confirmed me in the persuasion, for I immediately perceived it was a nuptial fete—I even heard the congratulations offered to your mother and Mrs. Beason.”

“Had you but approached a little nearer,” interrupted Colebrook, “you would have discovered that Lady Colebrook was felicitated on the marriage of her nephew, not her son.”

“I found myself incapable of approaching her,” said Fanny.

The delighted youth pressed her to his heart, as he exclaimed—“I saw you, my love, quit your father’s arm, and was at a loss to account for it.”

“You saw me!” cried Fanny, in amazement; “is it possible you were present?”

“I was

“ I was indeed.”

“ Good Heaven! how could I have overlooked you?”

“ I was at the farther end of the apartment when you entered; you continued near the door; and from the situation I was in, and the crowd which intervened between us, you could not (unless you had been told where to look for me), have distinguished me among a number of young men, dressed almost alike.”

“ Oh!” cried Fanny, “ so convinced was I of your absence, that even had you been close to me, it is more than probable I should not have perceived you, for I was literally stupified; yet I must own I accused Lavinia (mentally) of neglecting me; I am surprised she did not come to me, for she must have perceived my disorder.”

“ I can exculpate Lavinia, to whom I am for ever indebted. The moment she had paid her compliments to my mother, she told me she had something of conse-

quence to say to me, and we seated ourselves on the least frequented situation we could find, where we entered into a long explanatory conversation, in which she informed me of many circumstances which I before considered in a very different light. Oh! how did I lament my barbarous and unfeeling conduct! I can scarcely even now presume to hope that you can entirely forgive me—but Lavinia will explain all to you, when, I think, you will allow I was not quite so blamable; but it is an ungrateful subject, and she, I know, will spare me the pain of speaking upon it.”

At this moment Lavinia herself appeared; she tenderly embraced her sister, and Fanny hid her face on her bosom, as she murmured—“Oh, my dearest Lavinia! I have received a lesson I shall never forget.”

Colebrook then informed her of the extraordinary misunderstanding, which had caused so much misery.

Lavinia

Lavinia was as much astonished as he himself had been, at the recital—"Oh Fanny!" cried she, "how unfeeling you must have thought me!"

"No, indeed I imputed your silence to delicacy."

"It must be a stoical species of *delicacy*," replied Lavinia, "which could behold the sufferings of a sister, without at least offering the alleviation of sympathy. But," continued she, "I have neglected the errand I came upon—Lady Colebrook has been enquiring for you both; Sir Francis is engaged in the card-room, and Elizabeth is dancing, and she wanted you, Francis, to assist her in attending to the company. She observed, too, that Fanny had not been to speak to her; but said she supposed she was among the dancers, but she could not find her out. Now, I doubt not that similar remarks have been made by many others, and if it is ascertained that you are both absent, it may give room for some ridiculous remarks."

"Oh!

"Oh! pray go," said Fanny to her lover; "I find myself unable to appear again this evening, and I think I had better go home, as soon as the carriage can be procured."

Colebrook at first objected to this plan, being unwilling to part with Fanny, but Lavinia approved of it; for even had her sister been desirous of returning to the company, the disorder of her looks, and the redness of her eyes, would have rendered it absurd to think of it. Nor can it reasonably be supposed that she could, in the space of little more than an hour, be restored to perfect health; though the cause had ceased, the effects still continued in a great measure, though not to such extent; but she still suffered under a considerable degree of indisposition.

Colebrook now left them, but promised to return in a few minutes, and Lavinia repaired to the card-room, where her father had been engaged almost from the moment of his arrival; for, being a proficient

ficient in the scientific game of whist, he was generally pressed into the service, as soon as he made his appearance. Owing to this, he knew nothing of Fanny's having quitted the saloon, nor had he seen any thing of her from the time she had quitted his arm at their entrance; and he was greatly alarmed, when Lavinia informed him her sister was so unwell, as to be necessitated to return home, but said he would order the carriage directly, and accompany them. He was just released from the card-table, when Lavinia accosted him; when, having sent a servant to order the carriage, he accompanied her to the *boudoir*. Fanny did not appear so unwell as he expected to have found her, her inward sensations having spread an expression of satisfaction over her features; but she was still very pale, and the Colonel approved of her determination of going home.

Lavinia now went in search of Lady Colebrook, to whom she apologized for
being

being obliged to leave her so early, and informed her of her sister's indisposition, on which account she trusted her Ladyship would excuse the apparent rudeness of Fanny's behaviour, imputing it entirely to illness. Lady Colebrook was much hurt at this account, and chided Lavinia for not having before acquainted her with her sister's situation. She accompanied Lavinia to the *boudoir*, and entreated Fanny would allow her to procure something to take; but Fanny declined, assuring her Ladyship a night's rest would perfectly restore her. Lady Colebrook wished to summon her daughter, who was still engaged in dancing; but the sisters entreated she would not, as there was not the smallest necessity for interrupting her pleasure.

The carriage was now announced; Lady Colebrook was surprised to find that the Colonel intended to accompany his daughters — "Indeed, Sir," cried she, "there can be no possible reason why
you

you should leave us so early ; I am sure Sir Francis will be extremely hurt if you do."

The Colonel declared he should feel uneasy, until he knew how Fanny would find herself after the drive.

" I can easily satisfy you on that head, my dear Sir," returned her Ladyship ; " for Francis shall accompany the girls home, and as the carriage must return for you, he can come back in it, and you will know from him every particular you can desire."

The Colonel thanked Lady Colebrook for her kind attention, and agreed to her wishes. Her Ladyship had left her son in the saloon, with a charge to do the honours in her absence ; but on opening the door of the *boudoir*, she perceived Colebrook pacing the gallery, anxiously awaiting their *sortie*. He was delighted with the arrangement his mother had made ; and, without further delay, the sisters, escorted

escorted by him, stepped into the carriage, and turned their backs upon the scene of festivity, without one wish to partake of it.

It is unnecessary to expatiate upon the extreme contrast in Fanny's sensations, to what they had been but two short hours before; it can only be imagined by those who have been lifted from the depth of despair to the very pinnacle of earthly happiness. A quarter of an hour brought them to Fairfield Lodge, and, with light hearts, the sisters entered their beloved home. Colebrook still lingered, but being reminded by Lavinia that repose was the speediest specific to restore Fanny to perfect health, he affectionately bid them good night, and was reconveyed to the Hall.

Fanny retired immediately, but refused not, at her sister's request, to swallow a composing draught; for Lavinia was convinced, that without it she would obtain

no repose, as the extreme agitation she had undergone would assuredly deprive her of rest.

Lavinia sought her chamber, most happy in the conviction, that she had been the means of restoring happiness to two beings whom she so tenderly loved.

CHAP. III.

Let strict consistency thy genius rein.

Nor link thy story with a tangl'd chain.

E. P.

It was related in the fourteenth chapter of this work, that Mr. Marlow had written to Sir Francis Colebrook, acquainting him with his determination of quitting a profession he had ceased to prefer, and also of his intentions as to the mode of life he was in future

future to adopt. It was not thought advisable, at that time, to particularise this part of the letter to the reader, who will now be made acquainted with it; in order to do away any appearance of incongruity in the foregoing circumstances.

Mr. Marlow had further informed Sir Francis, in the letter above alluded to, that he had, during the preceding summer, formed an acquaintance with a Mrs. Beason and her daughter, who resided in a small town on the sea coast, where his regiment was then quartered. Mrs. Beason was the widow of a clergyman, who had died, leaving his wife and daughter barely a sufficiency to support a scanty appearance of gentility. It required but a very slight acquaintance to convince Mr. Marlow, that Miss Beason was the object formed to constitute his happiness; and being in possession of an ample fortune, he saw nothing to prevent his wishes, which he accordingly made known to Mrs. Beason and her daughter, by whom his
addresses.

addresses were accepted with undisguised satisfaction. Mr. Marlow immediately resolved on leaving the army, and retiring to his estate, as soon as his nuptials were concluded, where, it was agreed, Mrs. Beason should accompany them.

It is now necessary to inform the reader, that Mr. Marlow had a slight degree of ostentation in his composition; he therefore wished to have his marriage celebrated with every demonstration of magnificence. This could not possibly be done, with sufficient *eclat*, at the little vulgar fishing-town where his *intended* resided; he therefore protested, in his epistle to Sir Francis, that it would be conferring a lasting obligation on him, if Lady Colebrook would invite Mrs. and Miss Beason to Colebrook Hall, as it was his particular wish that his nuptials should take place in presence of his uncle and aunt. He added, that he was then in town, arranging the settlement, &c. preparatory to the happy event; for although the lady was *portionless*, he
resolved

resolved to make her an allowance suitable to his own affluent circumstances; but that as soon as this business was settled, he should join Mrs. and Miss Benson at the Hall, if his aunt would so far oblige him as to solicit their company.

Sir Francis had immediately acquainted his Lady with the contents of her nephew's letter; they both smiled, as the idea mutually struck them, that his great desire to solemnize his marriage in their presence, originated more in vanity than affection; but Lady Colebrook, with her accustomed indulgence to the offspring of a sister she had tenderly loved, agreed to his wishes, and dispatched an invitation to the Bensons, which, it is needless to say, was gratefully accepted.

Mr. Marlow had been detained till within three days of the period he had fixed upon for the celebration of his nuptials, and had, during these three days, been so busily employed in witnessing, and sometimes assisting in the preparations for the
grand

grand fete, that he had not stirred out of the house. As all trifling minds are fond of making a fuss about what is of no consequence, he had very seriously requested his cousin Frank would himself procure for him the ring, as a thing of great importance, in which he did not think it *proper* to appear himself.

Mr. Marlow would have been much better pleased to have remained to witness the splendid entertainment he had projected, to celebrate this joyful occasion; but he did not think it would have so good an *effect* in the eye of the *public*, if he did not, according to the fashion of the day, set out on a tour immediately after the ceremony; and as *appearances* was what he most studied, and *notoriety* what he most coveted, he resolved to comply, in the strictest manner, with all the punctilios of formality.

No one could be in company with Mr. Marlow and Miss Beason, without perceiving that they were exactly *suit*ed to each

each other; so striking in their manners and *notions*, I will not say *ideas*, for they merited not the appellation. I cannot denominate this reciprocity in disposition a *congeniality* of *souls*, for their *souls* were too lethargic to allow them to *amalgamate* (to use a *pet* word of a popular female cotemporary), but an *equal* degree of torpor prevailed in *either*, and *both* had alike made the *same progress* towards *intellectual perfection*.

Colonel Fairfield and Lavinia had been informed, by some of the Colebrook family, of the projected union, on the evening that Mrs. Beason and her daughter first appeared at the ball; but Fanny had so studiously avoided all intercourse with every member of it on that night, that it was not possible she could have heard it through them. Her sister, or father, would probably have mentioned it in the course of conversation, when they returned home; but it may be remembered that Fanny almost immediately retired to bed. By the
next

next morning the subject had faded from the mind of the Colonel, so small a degree of interest did *he* feel concerning Mr. Marlow and Miss Beason; and if it did occur, he imagined, as a thing of *course*, that Fanny knew it.

The superior concerns which occupied Lavinia's thoughts, may easily account for her never having mentioned it; but neither did *she* suppose her sister to be ignorant of it; but in fact, she scarcely recollected herself, for she was, at that time, full of disquietude, from the uneasiness she perceived her sister experienced, as well as the constant and habitual anxiety she ever endured respecting Major Berresford. Once or twice, while endeavouring to support a languid conversation with her sister, in the hope of dissipating their mutual pensiveness, she had accidentally mentioned Miss Beason; and, doubtless, would have proceeded to allude to her engagement, in some way or other, had not Fanny constantly interrupted her, the moment Miss

Beason's name was pronounced, by exclaiming—"Pray do not talk of that *stupid* girl, she is so uninteresting—I hate to hear her mentioned."

It would be offering an affront to the reader's penetration, were I to explain the origin of Fanny's dislike to Miss Beason, who, it cannot be forgotten, she regarded with the eyes of jealousy. The Colonel and Lavinia had, while on their way to Fairfield Lodge, encountered the carriage which contained the bride and bridegroom, followed by another, which was occupied by Frank Colebrook and his sister, who escorted them the first stage on their journey. The cavalcade stopped at the sight of the Colonel and his daughter, who warmly congratulated the parties, and then proceeded on their way. They were not acquainted with the precise day on which the marriage was to take place, but as they knew it was to be very soon, they of course experienced no surprise.

On their return to ~~E——~~, Lavinia found

found that a large piece of bride-cake had been left, and very naturally inferred, that Fanny *must* be acquainted with the event of the morning. On being informed that she was unwell, she had flown to her, but never for a moment conjectured the extent of her sufferings. She had long perceived her mental anguish, and was also assured that her bodily health was greatly affected; and justly attributing this to the *fracas* with Colebrook, she had resolved, for some days, to take an active part in this affair, nor suffer two people to remain mutually wretched, merely from being ignorant of their reciprocal feelings. She was much surprised at Colebrook's obduracy, for such she deemed it; for she thought her sister's altered looks, and general demeanor, were sufficient to assure him of her contrition. Yet the pale face, hollow cheeks, and perfect dejection of Colebrook, plainly evinced that he suffered severely.

It had been Lavinia's intention to have

entered on the subject to Colebrook, on the night of the last public ball, which, as her sister was absent, she could have done with greater propriety; but her amiable purpose of conciliating was frustrated, by his absenting himself nearly the whole evening; the cause of his absence she was unacquainted with, and was therefore ignorant of the additional heaviness that oppressed his heart, when she quitted him that night. From that time no opportunity had offered of putting her plan into execution; it was therefore necessarily delayed until the evening of the fete.

Why Fanny had so suddenly quitted her father's arm, on their entering the saloon, Lavinia could not conjecture any more than the Colonel; but, from the expression of her countenance, she was convinced that she experienced some very unpleasant sensation; whatever it might be, she doubted not it originated from a similar cause with all her unhappiness, and, therefore, instead of distressing her
with

with fruitless enquiries respecting her emotion, she resolved, as the most effectual method of relieving her, to strike at once at the root of her misery, by destroying the seed which produced it.

CHAP. IV.

Oh ! how can the senses by passion obscur'd,
Impartially judge or decide ?
Whoever has jealousy's tortures endur'd,
Will attend to the dictates of pride.

E. P.

WHEN Lavinia had gone through the accustomed ceremonials to Lady Colebrook and Mrs. Beason, and affectionately shaken the hands of Miss Colebrook and Frank, she turned to the latter, and, in a low voice, said—" I have something to say to you, Francis."

c 3

He

He looked surprised.

Miss Colebrook interrupted them, by enquiring for Fanny.

Lavinia said she was sitting near the door; and her friend replied, that she would go to her as soon as possible; but she feared it would be some time, as she was then engaged with a party, to whom she was obliged to pay particular attention, as it was the first time they had been at the Hall, and were strangers to most of the company.

Lavinia, passing her arm through Colebrook's, proceeded to a seat at a distant part of the room, which was deserted, from its retired situation. As they were walking up the saloon, Colebrook observed to Lavinia, that her sister was seated among strangers, and seemed quite alone.

"I know it," replied Lavinia; "I believe it is most congenial to her present temper of mind—I do not imagine she is much inclined for conversation."

Colebrook coloured, he knew not why,
and

and seated himself, in expectation of he knew not what.

Lavinia continued—"It is astonishing to me, Francis, you do not perceive the alteration in Fanny's looks." She paused; Colebrook changed colour repeatedly, but answered not. "Surely you must," added Lavinia.

Colebrook hemmed twice; his face became crimson, and assumed an expression of *hauteur* perfectly foreign to it, such as Lavinia had never before seen depicted there; at length he said—"Certainly, every one must perceive the extraordinary change that has lately taken place, both in your sister's *looks* and *manners*—and, I should imagine, few can be at a loss what to impute it to."

As he pronounced the concluding words, his voice trembled, and his colour totally forsook his face, leaving it pale as death. Lavinia looked at him with unfeigned amazement, in doubt what to infer from his words and demeanor. He averted his

face, and did not appear to conceive any explanation of his words necessary.

Lavinia remained silent for a few moments, revolving in her mind what he could possibly allude to; still at a loss, she continued—"You certainly must labour under some very great mistake, or you never could speak in this manner."

Colebrook shook his head mournfully.

Lavinia went on—"You allow the alteration that has taken place in Fanny, and you say, 'few can be at a loss what to impute it to;' *you* must be one among the few, or you never could mention it so lightly."

"I never spoke *lightly* of any thing that concerned her in my life," cried Colebrook, in great agitation; "but ah! Lavinia, why do you force me to speak upon this subject? Surely you cannot wish to torture me unnecessarily; for Mercy's sake! then, drop it, and suffer me, *if* I can, to smother my anguish in secret."

"Good Heaven!" cried Lavinia, "what
can

can this mean? I cannot believe it possible that the foolish occurrences that took place at the ball can have thus affected you. Surely, when you are convinced, by Fanny's appearance, as you must be, that she laments sincerely the events of that evening, which, to do her justice, sprang from her too great desire to monopolize your exclusive attention—surely, Francis, you ought to have pardoned it long since.”

“Lavinia! do not wrong me so much, as to imagine it possible I could harbour the recollection of an injury, had it been followed by contrition. Oh no! my too fond heart was all eagerness, all impatience (spite of all the efforts of mortified pride); nay, it *would* return to its allegiance—No, no! the occurrences of that evening would long since have been forgiven, had not subsequent events continually recalled them—no, Lavinia! it is *you*, not I, that are deceived.” Colebrook covered his face with his hand, to conceal the agony expressed in it.

"Oh tell me, Francis! for God's sake, explain the circumstances you allude to! I am certain you are deceived. I would pledge my life that Fanny loves you fondly, dearly loves you—even as much as I love——"

She paused—the enthusiasm of her feelings, and anxiety for her sister, had hurried her beyond herself—she was about to have said "*Berresford*;" but when she would have pronounced his name, she felt the tears spring to her eyes, and immediately recollecting herself, she with difficulty repelled them, and the loved name was buried in a deep sigh.

Colebrook seemed greatly affected by the energy of Lavinia's words and manner, and he replied—"There was a time when I would have credited this, Lavinia, and never before did I doubt your penetration—but sisterly affection has eclipsed truth. No, no!" continued he, in a suffocated voice, "Fanny loves me no more!—She
never

never could have loved me, or I should not so easily have been supplanted."

"Supplanted!" re-echoed Lavinia; "by whom? who can you possibly regard as a rival?"

"And *can* you ask? *you* who witnessed the undisguised partiality displayed for ———" he paused.

"Who?" cried Lavinia, eagerly.

"Your Major's brother," added Colebrook, averse to pronouncing the name of a man he detested. While he spake, the glow of anger succeeded the paleness of despair.

"Is it possible you can still imagine that Fanny was partial to Captain Berresford? I give you my word, she dislikes him excessively; and" it was with difficulty I prevailed upon her to behave with common civility towards him, after the night of the ball."

"You are deceived, greatly deceived!" cried Colebrook; "I could prove it, if I would."

“ And why not ? but I do not *ask* you now ; I must *demand* an explanation of what so materially concerns my sister—I will not suffer her to remain under an imputation, when I am thoroughly convinced she is innocent.” Lavinia spoke this in a resolute tone ; and she added, in a raptured accent, “ Oh Francis ! you are the *last* person I should have imagined would have believed any thing against her.”

Colebrook looked distressed at witnessing her emotion, and, laying his hand on her's, he said, in a melancholy voice—“ Nothing short of conviction should have convinced me ; but you shall hear, and judge for yourself.”

Colebrook's countenance now wore a more composed aspect ; a ray of hope, unknown to himself, irradiated his breast. The emphatic energy of Lavinia's words, who never spoke in vain, affected his soul ; and the *possibility* that he might be mistaken, dawned on his gloomy mind, like Aurora's first beams dispersing the shade
of

of obscurity. After a short silence, Colebrook continued—"You remember, Lavinia, that yourself, the Colonel, and ——" he paused, then added, casting his eyes downwards, "she was with you—you all called the morning after the ball"

"I perfectly recollect it," cried Lavinia, observing he waited a reply.

"Well, I need not tell you I had been wretched all night. My pride not being quite exhausted, I resolved I would not visit L—— that day, and I complied with Elizabeth's request, to accompany her and Miss Beason in a *long* walk. We had not been gone ten minutes, when I found society so irksome, and my misery so insufferable, that I determined to make an excuse to return, and then ride to L——, and, by seeking an interview, put an end to my anxiety, one way or the other. In pursuance of this plan, I persuaded Miss Beason that it was going to rain, and would consequently be imprudent to extend our walk. Elizabeth agreed with me, perceiv-

ing

ing that I wanted an excuse for terminating this stupid expedition. Miss Beason complied, and we returned to the house, little more than a quarter of an hour after we had quitted it; I found you all there, and I felt gratified, and began to flatter myself with renewed hopes. I thought she looked as if she had not rested well; and when I handed her to the carriage her hand trembled." Colebrook paused, then, with a deep sigh, he continued—"I augured well from this, and was restless, even to misery, till the succeeding day, when, as soon as breakfast was over, I mounted my horse, and proceeded, elate with hope, to E——, still as much a slave as ever, notwithstanding the treatment I had experienced; and I own I deplored the temporary spirit I had displayed, and thought I had too warmly resented an offence, which I endeavoured to find excuses for in my own mind. As I was turning the corner of the street which leads to your house, I met that puppy Berresford; he accosted me, and asked me
where

where I was *bound*? and before I could answer, he said, ‘ but I suppose you are going to see your friends, the Fairfields. I am this moment come from thence, and had the supreme felicity of a *tête-à-tête* with Miss Fanny, for the Colonel and Miss Fairfield were both out.’ I could not sufficiently recover myself,” continued Colebrook; “ and he added, assuming all the airs and gestures of a complete coxcomb, ‘ upon my soul, Fanny Fairfield is a charming girl; I begin to think I am a very insensible fellow, for leaving her so soon.’ I was so thoroughly disgusted with his impertinent puppyism, that, without noticing him, any farther than by a slight inclination of my head, I left him, and proceeded on my way. Yet I was irresolute whether to turn back or not, for the words I had just heard nearly annihilated the hopes I had again been encouraging. I was still undetermined, when my horse mechanically stopped before your house; on looking up, I perceived your sister at
the

the window. I enquired for the Colonel and the young ladies; and the man, without *hesitation*, said you were *all* out. I then asked, if he was certain Miss Fanny was out? he said she was. This was quite enough—could I require more, to convince me I was not only rejected, but despised, insulted? She had admitted Captain Berresford, the acquaintance of a day, to a *tête-à-tête*, and, after shewing herself at the window, had denied me admission. Ah Lavinia! there can be no extenuation offered for this." Colebrook pressed his hand to his forehead, and rubbed it, as if enduring some extreme suffering.

"I can prove," cried Lavinia, "that however appearances may have deceived you, had you been acquainted with the truth, you would have found additional reason for hope." She here related the circumstance of Captain Berresford's having entered the house without knocking, and also the very cavalier manner in which

Fanny

Fanny had contrived to dismiss him, which she herself had told her, alledging his familiar intrusion as one of the causes of her dislike to him. Lavinia continued—"As to the mistake of your being denied admission, I before explained it to you, and I again protest, that Fanny has never been happy since this foolish business happened. As to Captain Berresford's conceited speech, I am not in the least surprised at it, as it was easy to perceive that he had a tincture of vanity in his composition, and, I doubt not, he observed your uneasiness at the first part of his communication, and that stimulated him to terminate it as he did."

Colebrook pressed Lavinia's hand with fervour, saying—"You pour balm into my heart; but I scarce dare believe what I wish, and I have not yet told you all," added he, while blended hope and fear were struggling for pre-eminence. "The next night you were at the play, that detestable puppy attended you the whole evening, and

and when you quitted the theatre, your sister leaned on his arm."

"Now, Francis," interrupted Lavinia, "I think you unreasonable. Is it so very strange, that when there are only two ladies and two gentlemen of the party, that they should walk in pairs?"

"No, certainly; but she might as well have taken the Colonel's arm, and left you to Captain Berresford."

"Oh!" cried Lavinia, laughing, "I will not admit this as the smallest excuse for you; so you must tell me something more, before I can forgive you the pain you made poor Fanny suffer on that night. I wish you could have seen her face when you quitted our box; I am convinced she heard every word you said, for she was so agitated, that it was on her account I proposed going home."

"Oh Heaven! is it possible? but no, it could not be; she wore the appearance of extreme gaiety, during the whole evening. I frequently stole a glance at her,
and

and always observed her laughing, and apparently delighted."

"Take my word for it, it was only *apparently*," rejoined Lavinia, "for I am certain Fanny never was more wretched than when she retired to bed that night."

Colebrook gazed on her with an expression of eager expectation, listening for still farther proofs of his being beloved; when she ceased, he exclaimed—"Oh if I dare believe you! But, Lavinia, the day Captain Berresford quitted his station off L——, Fanny refused to go to the ball, on the plea of indisposition. Did she ever tell you what happened that night?"

"No," answered Lavinia, with surprise; "what was it?"

"You remember that you told me at the ball that she was very ill, and was gone to bed (now, Lavinia, I confess all my weakness to you). I was on thorns until I had got rid of Miss Beason, with whom I was forced to dance the first set. At one
moment

moment I was wretched, lest Fanny should be seriously ill, and the next I was in despair, at the idea that she had absented herself on account of Captain Berresford's departure, or that her indisposition might be produced by vexation at that event. I resolved to call at the door, and enquire if she was in reality so bad as my disturbed imagination apprehended. I cannot express to you my astonishment, when, as I was waiting in the parlour while William was gone to procure me intelligence, Fanny herself entered ! I had imagined she was so ill as to be obliged to go to bed—you may conceive my confusion ; added to which was the assurance, that her absence from the ball was not owing to illness, but merely an excuse for staying at home ; this I naturally attributed to her distaste for society, when Captain Berresford was absent. I confess, she betrayed strong indications of indisposition ; but this I imputed to the same cause, or perhaps from surprise at my sudden appearance.

ance. I thought, too, that she experienced some contrition at the sight of my dejection, for she seemed desirous of conciliating me, but I repelled the attempt. Yes, Lavinia, you may well look amazed ; but the idea that *pity* was the only emotion she felt for me (while my favoured rival possessed those affections I would have sacrificed every temporal good to have gained), added such acute torture to the weight of my misery, that I was insensible—yes, I wonder at myself ! I was deaf to the wish she expressed, that I would not leave her : but this temporary spark of resentment was soon extinguished, and I found my habitual weakness fast returning, when, making a violent effort, not daring even to look at her, I fled.” He paused, and bent his eyes to the ground, as if ashamed and sorry for having acted as he had done.

“ You left her ! ” exclaimed Lavinia, in accents of amazement. “ You left her, when she had made advances towards a reconciliation, and had requested you to stay !

stay ! is it possible ? My poor Fanny, you never told me this ! Oh Francis ! how could you——”

Lavinia stopped, she felt a sudden rising in her throat, which impeded utterance, and it was with difficulty she restrained her tears, when she reflected how much Fanny must have suffered, before she could have bent her proud spirit to solicit one whom she had been accustomed to rule ; and what added mortification she must have endured, when she found her entreaties disregarded ! For a few moments both remained silent, when Colebrook, raising his eyes, said, in a supplicating tone——“ I see you are angry with me ; but only consider the provocation I had !—no less than the confirmation that I was deprived of that love, which it had been the very principle of my existence to attain.”

“ Oh, I am vexed with you, Francis ! How could you have so mean an opinion of her you loved, as to believe she could entertain a partiality for a man she had
known

known for a few days? it was unreasonable: you should not suffer passion thus to blind you—you have made Fanny very miserable, and I cannot forgive you, while she remains so."

"Oh tell me!" cried Colebrook, in extreme agitation, "what shall I do? I fear she will not listen to me, if I attempt to speak to her—I can scarcely dare hope she will forgive me—what an unfeeling fool have I been! But tell me again, Lavinia, are you *quite sure* she does not like Captain Berresford?"

Lavinia's patience was almost exhausted, and she said, in a tone of pleasantry, "You are the most troublesome animal I ever had to deal with!—I have told you, again and again, she dislikes him, more than any one she knows!"

"Then why did not she go to the ball the night he went away?"

"Because," returned Lavinia, "she cared a great deal too much for a disagreeable boy, that did not choose to speak to her

her when she met him ; and as she was foolish enough to think his presence the chief charm of society, she would not join in it, when deprived of his attentions—this, I can take upon me to assert, was her real motive, though she did not tell me so.”

“ Oh !” cried Colebrook, his countenance expressing the delight her words produced, “ you are laughing at me !”

“ You are enough to make the most serious laugh,” returned Lavinia, “ with hopes, doubts, and fears, tormenting yourself and every one connected with you—take my advice, and make your peace as soon as possible.”

Colebrook’s face became crimson with agitation, as he exclaimed—“ Good God ! how shall I address her, or how tell her all I feel ? it is impossible, in such a public place—I am sure my emotion would betray itself.”

“ Then I will go and prepare her,” said Lavinia, rising.

“ Oh

"Oh do!" returned Colebrook; "but do not be long—shall I follow you?"

"Not immediately," answered Lavinia.

She now took a survey of the apartment, to see if Fanny retained her former situation, but she could not perceive her any where; she approached the door, followed at a distance by Colebrook. Upon enquiry, she found that her sister had been seen leaving the room, and a servant informed her he had seen Miss Fanny cross the gallery, and go down the corridor leading to Miss Colebrook's apartments.

Lavinia now concluded her sister had found herself unwell, and was probably in the *boudoir*, to the door of which she advanced, exclaiming—"She must be in the *boudoir*!" Listening attentively, she plainly distinguished the heavy sighs of her sister—"Ah!" thought she, "I hope all cause for sighing is now at an end." She hesitated whether to enter herself, or allow Colebrook to surprise her, when her mind was softened, and a reconciliation might

more easily be effected ; while she wavered, she perceived him within a few paces, expressing, by his gestures, the strongest degree of anxiety. She beckoned him to approach, and said, in a whisper—" Fanny is in the *boudoir* ; will you go to her yourself ?"

Colebrook started ; he trembled universally ; for a moment he was irresolute, when, advancing with a quick step, without suffering himself again to pause, he gently tapped at the door of the *boudoir*—what followed has already been related, and is now, without aid of witch or wizard, brownie, kelpie, sylph, gnome, magician, or fee, very simply accounted for.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Smiles dew'd with tears the pleasing strife express,
Of grief and joy alternate in her breast.

POPE.

THE next morning, as soon as Lavinia had completed her toilette, she hastened to her sister's apartment. She found her up, and nearly ready to make her *sortie*. Lavinia expressed her pleasure at finding her so much restored, and Fanny met her with an affectionate embrace; as she pressed her to her heart, she fervently exclaimed, while tears filled her eyes—"Oh Lavinia, I am so happy! When I awoke this morning, I felt as if I was in Heaven! as the consciousness of the reality gradually disclosed

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itself

itself to my senses, such a contrast to the heavy gloom which, for some days past, has marked my waking moments."

Lavinia thoroughly participated in her happiness, and as the Colonel had not yet left his bed, she took this opportunity of informing Fanny of the conversation which had taken place between herself and Frank Colebrook, and concluded by saying—"I hope now, my dear Fanny, you will no longer object to allowing Francis to solicit you in form from our father? You know it has long been his first wish, and I see no purpose it can answer to delay your mutual happiness—and I think, after what has past, you cannot hesitate to consign your fate to the care of one who every way merits your affection."

Fanny blushed as she replied—"Certainly, I consider Francis as my future husband; I shall therefore, of course, make no objection to his applying to my father. But, Lavinia," she continued, pressing her sister's hand to her heart, and looking at her

her affectionately, " I will not marry while your fate remains involved in uncertainty—shall the happiest period of my life be embittered by the idea that you are unable to participate in my feelings? Shall I, considering myself alone, secure my own felicity, while you remain a prey to torturing apprehension, ignorant of the destiny of him for whom we *all* feel so great an interest, that whatever concerns him, must inevitably involve the peace of the whole family? No, no; under these circumstances, my nuptials would prove a reproach."

Lavinia turned from her sister, unable to reply, or advance the argument she conceived would induce her to change her resolution. She was completely overcome by the tenderness conveyed in Fanny's address, and she sunk on a seat, and, covering her face with her hands, for a few moments indulged her tears. Fanny wept also, while her sensations were combined of direct contrarieties, as sorrowing for her

sister, and rejoicing for herself, she alternately shed tears of pain and pleasure. Lavinia did not long yield to the weakness that oppressed her, but rising and drying her eyes, she said—"I am unable to speak on this subject at present, but I trust I shall, some other time, be able to convince you, that you ought not to postpone any sublunary bliss, that can be enjoyed without doing violence to propriety. I have experienced so completely the folly of useless delays, that I am fully competent to descant upon them."

Lavinia sighed, at the recollection of her obstinate refusal to comply with Berresford's ardent entreaties for their immediate union; but this sensation was produced merely by the acuteness of regret she at this moment experienced; and there is not a doubt, that had she been reacting the same scene, she would, upon reflection, have conducted herself precisely as she had before done.

"But," said Fanny, as they descended the

the stairs, arm in arm, "Francis is not a soldier, and, consequently, not subject to the vicissitudes attendant on a military life."

"Human life," returned Lavinia, "at every period, and in every situation, is subject to constant vicissitudes; therefore," continued she, in a solemn tone, and pressing her hand upon her sister's arm, "Fanny, wisely enjoy the present bliss, for God only knows what may be impending!"

A shuddering horror ran through her veins, as she pronounced the concluding words, produced by the shocking idea which at the moment shot through her mind, that if Berresford was doomed to fall, it must necessarily be some time before such an event as a wedding could be solemnized in their family. She entered the breakfast-room, aghast at the appalling images which presented themselves to her boding imagination. Fanny regarded her with painful solicitude, for the deepened

sadness which clouded her features, together with the almost awful manner in which she had addressed her, convinced her of what was passing in her mind, and proved an additional motive for determining her to defer her marriage—"For," thought she, "shall the first hours of connubial love be stained with the tears of my sister? (and such a sister too!) Shall the portentous image of Berresford, wounded or dying, perhaps (Oh God avert it!) the dreadful certainty of death itself, obtrude upon the most extatic moments, and blast my halcyon days, converting tears of transport into drops of bitterest anguish. Heaven forbid! No, never will I be the wife of Colebrook, until we are assured of Berresford's health and safety."

Lavinia had approached the breakfast-table, and busied herself about it, while she endeavoured to recall her composure; and, forcibly turning the channel of her thoughts, she asked her sister, if she wished their father should continue ignorant of
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the mistake she had laboured under the preceding day?

To which Fanny replied—"By no means; I should rather my father knew it, as some excuse for my apparent strange conduct. I beg you will mention it to him, Lavinia, for I do not like to speak of my folly myself; but I see no necessity for any body else being made acquainted with it, as it might subject me to ridicule."

Lavinia perfectly coincided in her sister's opinion—"William, and the other servants, were at first in a similar error with yourself," said Lavinia; "but they must of course be undeceived by this time."

"Poor William!" cried Fanny, "he really appeared greatly distressed when he made the communication; I should like to have seen him when he found out his mistake."

"Now I recollect," exclaimed Lavinia, "he must have known it last night; for Robert, who attended us in our ride yesterday morning, heard us congratulate

Mr. *Marlow*; and his information, no doubt, cleared up the mistake."

This had in reality been the case; Robert and William had blundered on for some time at cross purposes, when the latter was at length convinced of the truth, which, with unfeigned joy, he communicated to the rest of the household.

The Colonel joined his daughters while they were still conversing on the events of the preceding day. He was most happy to perceive the amendment in Fanny's health; he had seen enough the night before, when Colebrook was conducting her to the carriage, to convince him that their disagreement was completely adjusted, and in the *enjoué* air which now marked her features, he read a confirmation of the truth. He participated largely in the restored harmony, and diverted the sisters by a ludicrous account of the events which occurred subsequent to their departure from the Hall—"I had the supreme honour and *felicity*," cried the Colonel,

lonel, " of being seated next Mrs. Beason at supper, and never in my life did I have so complete a dish of *small-talk* ; though I must do the lady the justice to say, that she furnished the whole subject of conversation, and was so kind as to save me the trouble of expressing my sentiments, which she appeared by no means anxious to be made acquainted with, for she constantly interrupted me when I attempted to speak ; all she required was a simple ' indeed ! ' or ' really ! ' or some such indication that she was attended to."

" And what on earth did she find to talk about so incessantly ? " demanded Fanny.

" Why, I believe it would take you some time to guess," replied the Colonel, " for the subject was neither calculated to amuse either man, woman, or child—it was of no less *importance*, than an account of Miss Beason's (I should say Mrs. Marlow's) splendid wardrobe and elegant ornaments, a particular description of which, with the *prices*, and *names* of the *makers*, this good

woman was so abundantly obliging as to communicate to me, at the same time expatiating largely upon the immense expence people of *consequence* were at now-a-days in *fitting* out their daughters in a suitable style. I could scarcely forbear laughing *out*, at this ridiculous pomposity, for Sir Francis had been telling me not two hours before, that Marlow had brought down a large trunk full of presents for his bride, and that this, together with what Lady Colebrook presented her, was quite sufficient to fit her out for the occasion, and *was*, indeed, nearly all she had, as the confined circumstances of her mother prevented her expending any sum for that purpose. Now, poverty," continued the Colonel, "is always a recommendation, in my eyes, when brought on by unmerited distress, or fortuitous events; but there is nothing disgusts me more, than that ridiculous ostentation (the sure attendant of a little mind) that raises itself at the expence of others, and pretends to
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a superiority in pecuniary circumstances, to hide its deficiencies in the more essential requisites of intellectual virtues and endowments."

The sisters could not refrain a laugh at Mrs. Beason's expence, and Fanny expressed a hope that she would soon join her *interesting* son and daughter.

"She leaves the Hall the beginning of the week," replied the Colonel, "by which time the young couple will have reached their estate, where she is to join them."

"And who was seated next you on the other side?" asked Lavinia.

"Oh! there I was equally unfortunate; for the lady who occupied that situation was displaying all *ses agacerie* to captivate an insensible fellow who has just purchased a large estate in this county. I really *sympathised* in his feelings, for he appeared as thoroughly weary of his fair neighbour's persecution as I was of mine; but notwithstanding his repeated gape, and the vacant laugh, that denoted his inattention, she

she continued indefatigable, from time to time, arousing him by a playful tap with her fan; and frequently, when she had made a feeble attempt at wit, at the expence of some of the company, she would ask him what he was laughing at? when the poor man was looking as serious as possible. Then he would stare at her with astonishment (for I fancy he was a novice, and did not understand what she would be at); when she would burst into a loud laugh, and protest he was the *strangest creature* she had ever seen. For a short time I amused myself with observing this animated *tête-à-tête* (which, by the bye, I think might be denominated a *solo*, for certainly there was but one performer); but I soon got tired of it, and finding Mrs. Beason's tongue still moved incessantly, I looked round in search of something to amuse my eyes, as my ears were doomed to be annoyed. The company were too numerous to be all seated at the same board, but two large tables, of equal length,

length, accommodated all the party. Lady Colebrook and Sir Francis presided at the one at which I was seated, and Frank and his sister did the honours of the other. Where I sat, I had a perfect view of poor Frank, and I soon found subject for amusement in watching him. He had some blamange on his plate, on which his eyes were fixed, as he tortured it with a silver fork, and from time to time elevated a small piece to his mouth. He seemed entirely to have forgotten that he was placed there to do the *honours*, for those by whom he was surrounded either helped themselves, or remained without ; their glasses continued empty ; and if they, by chance, addressed a sentence to the vice-president, after being at the trouble to repeat it several times, all the answer they could obtain was ‘ aye, what ? Sir ! I beg your pardon, but really I did not hear you.’ When the cloth was removed, Elizabeth called to him from the head of the table three several times, to beg he would push round the wine ; when
she

she at last made him hear, he started so violently, that he overset a glass of wine, which had been standing untouched before him near half an hour. His awkwardness produced a general laugh, which proved beneficial to poor Frank, by obliging him to recall his wandering ideas, and discovered to him the ridiculous light he appeared in. After this he became less abstracted, and endeavoured to join in conversation; here, therefore, my amusement ceased."

Lavinia was highly entertained with this account of Colebrook, as she knew very well what to impute it to; and Fanny was delighted with it, as it convinced her of his unabated affection. After some comments from the sisters, on what he had said, the Colonel continued—"My indefatigable neighbour still persecuted me with the same theme, of which I was convinced, by a word I caught here and there, for my attention being otherwise engaged, I heard very little of the good lady's communication.

munication. I saw no probability of her ceasing, so I began to seek for some *inward* source of amusement. I heard them at the bottom of the table merely circulating charades, enigmas, and *bon mots*, but most of them I had heard at least a hundred times before, and not one which I had not either told myself, or heard from others; nor could I recollect one to tell, that I was not certain most of the company already knew, so I set my wits to work, and made one extempore on the very first thing that came into my head. As soon as I had completed it, I repeated it, with 'all its imperfections on its head,' *pro bono publico*."

"Oh do tell it us!" cried the sisters, both together.

"I will transcribe it for you," replied the Colonel, taking out his pencil and an old letter, on the back of which he wrote the following enigma, which I have presumed to insert, hoping it may prove a trifling gratification to the reader. The
Colonel

Colonel presented it to Lavinia, saying—
 “Sir Francis found it out the moment I
 had repeated the fourth verse ; but he was
 too *prudent* to tell it, but suffered the rest
 of the company to guess at it, but not
 long, for it was very soon discovered.”

THE ENIGMA *.

It is said I'm of Genius a part,
 But *alone* I can nothing perform ;
 At *Athens* I first learnt the art,
 Where they say I the coldest could warm.

In Poland some mines I possess,
 From whence no one can ever depart,
 But admiring, they frankly confess
 I'm a mixture of Nature and Art !

Without

* The Enigma was in reality composed extempore, and repeated, word for word, as it is transcribed above, before it was even committed to paper. The Author humbly requests, that *this* may be accepted as an excuse for any poetical errors which may occur in it ; and, as a farther apology, begs leave to inform the Reader, that it was her *first* attempt at trifles of this description. If the solution is required, it will be found at the conclusion of this volume.

Without me you ever will find
Insipid and tasteless those things,
In which I've a power assign'd,
No less at the table of kings!

And once since the world first began,
A female I firmly detain'd,
As from sin and pollution she ran,
I perform'd what the Highest ordain'd!

When life with the spirit is fled,
I sometimes am found to succeed;
And even recall from the *dead*
Those we thought from mortality freed.

I inhabit the depths of the sea,
And often on earth I reside,
And where'er you at dinner may be,
You'll be sure to find me by your side!

The girls were delighted with this *petit morceau*, which they very soon succeeded in discovering. Lavinia, having concluded her breakfast, left the room in order to insert it in her book, containing "*Select Flights*"

Flights of Genius." Whether it *merited* to be placed there, the reader must determine; but filial affection converted it into a master-piece of wit, in the estimation of the offspring of a justly idolized parent.

CHAP. VI.

Oh! who can tell, what numbers can reveal
The tenderness which pious lovers feel?
Who can their secret pangs and sorrows tell,
With all the crowd of cares that in their bosoms dwell?

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

WHEN Lavinia had quitted the room, the Colonel said, casting his eyes pensively to the ground—"How often I thought of poor, dear Berresford, in the course of last night! I could not help recalling how
angry

angry I was with him the *last* time I was at a ball at Colebrook Hall, when his attention to Lavinia distressed me so much. Estimable young man ! I am, indeed, most anxious to hear of his welfare. I find that it is the general opinion that the expedition is destined to attack Egypt, in which case it may yet be some time before we have any decisive intelligence—indeed our not hearing from him is nothing extraordinary, for a large force which sailed several months prior to that in which Berresford's regiment was included, has never been accounted for, and it is supposed that the last expedition was destined either to form a junction with or reinforce the former. I never told either you or your sister, but I read in the paper, about six weeks ago, that the expedition in which we have so great an interest, had touched at Minorca, and had been joined by some troops from that island, and that the whole of the force was destined to make a grand attack, the perils and dangers of which, with

with the glory of the conquest, *if* they should succeed, was largely expatiated upon. I did not think this account calculated to quiet our Lavinia's apprehension, and therefore prevented her reading the newspaper that day, by telling her there was nothing that would amuse her in it. I thought, too, that she would be uneasy at not hearing from Berresford from Minorca. I am convinced myself that he must have written, but the letter has, doubtless, miscarried; for the accounts mentioned that the whole fleet was in good health and high spirits."

Fanny sighed as her father concluded, and said, that she thought him right in concealing this communication from Lavinia.

The temporary gloom was now completely dissipated by the entrance of Colebrook and his sister; the latter came expressly to apologize to Fanny, for her seeming neglect on the preceding night, which she amply excused, by professing
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her ignorance of her being indisposed, until after she was gone. Colebrook fondly pressed the hand that Fanny held out to him, and, seating himself next her, he enquired tenderly after her health; but all conversation, of any interest, was prevented by the arrival, in succession, of numerous visitants (among whom were Mr. and Mrs. Williams), who called to enquire after Fanny, having been informed that illness had been the cause of her precipitate retreat on the preceding evening.

Frank and Miss Colebrook remained to dine, and during the evening the former had an opportunity of conversing with his beloved. He enquired if Lavinia had told her what had past between them, prior to his surprising her in the *boudoir*?

Fanny answered, that she had but added, "I cannot admit any excuse for your conduct." Colebrook looked serious; he knew not how to interpret words so little corresponding with the expression of countenance with which they were uttered;

ed; "For," continued Fanny, "your conduct requires no excuse whatever—I only wish I could find one for mine!"

"Oh, my Fanny! I thank you from my heart, for all you have made me suffer; for, had it been otherwise, I never could have been so completely convinced that I was dear to you—I never should have experienced the extacy of being suddenly elevated from despair to bliss!"

Fanny's cheeks glowed as the recollection recurred, of how undisguisedly she had displayed her affection for him in the *boudoir* scene. Colebrook warmly urged her to allow him to apply to her father, to which she affected not to object; but to his ardent solicitation for an immediate union, she made a similar reply to that she had given her sister upon the same subject; and so feelingly did she expatiate upon it, that Colebrook no longer prest her, but contented himself with her solemn promise to become his, when the welfare of Major Berresford was once ascertained.

The carriage from the Hall, ~~to~~ to reconduct Miss Colebrook and her brother, was announced about eleven o'clock; and they were only permitted to depart, upon a promise that they would, the next day, return to take up their abode at Fairfield for some time.

Before they retired to rest, Lavinia informed her father of all that had taken place between Fanny and young Colebrook. At the former part of the account, the Colonel was by no means surprised; but when he heard of the blunder which had been the result of William's communication, he could not forbear a hearty laugh; but when farther informed of the length of time Fanny had continued under its influence (which he had imagined was but for a few minutes), he suddenly became serious; and when Lavinia pathetically represented the anguish she must have endured, the Colonel discovered all the father, and could only satisfy himself

by remembering, that whatever she had suffered, the *denouement* was most fortunate ; and he trusted, that the pain which had been inflicted would eventually prove the balm of their future lives.

By this information the Colonel was prepared for the very serious face with which Francis Colebrook addressed him the succeeding day, and, in a whisper, requested a few moments private conversation with him. The Colonel could not forbear a smile, as he led the way to the library, where he patiently attended to a long speech, every word of which he conceived before it could be uttered. It is almost needless to add, that Colonel Fairfield acceded to every thing his young friend could desire ; but when Colebrook stated his wish for a speedy conclusion of the business, and the objection Fanny had offered, the Colonel exclaimed—" Indeed I think her perfectly right, and that she has conducted herself just as I expected ; for
Fanny

Fanny has a great deal of feeling, and loves her sister tenderly—she must be devoid of both, had she acted otherwise.”

From this day Francis Colebrook was considered and treated by both families as Fanny's future husband. Lady Colebrook made her daughter-*elect* many valuable presents, as proof of her affection. Fanny often reproached herself for the illiberal opinion she had (for a few hours) conceived of that amiable woman, and also of Sir Francis, when she imagined them capable of persuading their son to marry, through pique or revenge. She could not for some time forgive herself, for having injured them so much, even in idea; and she endeavoured, by the strictest circumspection in her conduct towards Colebrook, and the most conciliating attentions to his parents, to make up for the misery she had caused the former, and the injustice she had done the latter.

Lavinia made some feeble attempts to induce her sister to change her resolution

of deferring her marriage, but in vain; and she did not press the subject, for it was one on which she was averse to speaking, for in advancing arguments to convince, she must recall images, the most distant contemplation of which was hideous to reflection. One of her chief employments, since Berresford's departure, had been transcribing her ideas upon paper, which she had promised him she would do, as well as every event of any importance which might occur. This she was to do in the style of letters, and as soon as she could ascertain where he was (and that he would continue stationary a sufficient time to allow a packet to reach him), she was to dispatch this little journal. In proportion as her anxiety encreased, her time became almost wholly devoted to this occupation, from which she derived her chief source of gratification; for, while addressing the object of her most anxious solicitude, and expressing to him all her emotion, her chilling fears, languid hope,

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torturing doubts, and not unfrequent despondency, she felt an alleviation of her misery, though a killing thought would often cross her mind, that the being she was then addressing might perhaps at that moment be incapable of understanding—that his godlike soul might have joined its congenial spirits in the realms above!—those eyes which had so often beamed on her with indescribable fondness, might now perhaps be shut to every earthly object—they might never survey the lines she was tracing—her Edward! Almighty Power! her Edward might even at that instant be the prey of loathsome reptiles! Starting with horror, she would throw down her pen, and uttering a smothered groan, while the very blood in her veins seemed curdled by the dreadful conception, she would precipitately quit her apartment, and, in a hasty walk through the adjacent grounds, accompanied only by her faithful Fido, endeavour to alleviate, by exercise and reasoning, the dejection

of her soul. But it was seldom Lavinia permitted these gusts of agony to overwhelm her; for, in general, when she found herself inclined to more than usual sadness, she would seek the society of her father and sister, and combat, instead of encourage, her disposition to despond. Fido was so much attached to her, that he never left her side; and well he might be, for she was constantly fondling and indulging him. One day, when she was caressing him to an excess, which she herself thought ridiculous, by allowing him to jump into her lap, her father, laughing, said—" Berresford will not thank you, Lavinia, for spoiling his dog."

She replied, while tears filled her eyes—" Oh, poor fellow! I should not do so, if his master was here—but he is so forlorn without him;" then, between a laugh and a cry, she ran out of the room, attended by Fido, who kept springing up to her as he bounded along.

Frequent letters had past between Lavinia

vinia and Lady Maria Courtney, who ever addressed the former as she would have done a daughter ; and, without having seen each other, they were as well acquainted, and understood their reciprocal sentiments to as great a nicety, as if they had been intimate for years :—

Is aught so fair,
In all the dewy landscape of the spring,
In the bright eye of Hesper, or the morn,
In Nature's fairest form—is aught so fair
As virtuous friendship ?

AKENSIDE.

In the undisguised terms in which they mutually expressed their opinions and sentiments, was displayed the souls and dispositions which dictated them. Unrestrained by the presence of the object we address, our sentiments are evinced to greater perfection in writing, than they can possibly be by speech, which is frequently disfigured by awkward expressions, and rendered incoherent from an

emotion, which may almost be denominated *mauvaise honte*, a sensation very common, when we are endeavouring to explain the feelings of our hearts, even to our most intimate friend—but on paper they appear to the utmost advantage; then are displayed

Those finer features of the feeling heart,
Those tender tints that shun the careless eye,
And in the world's contagious climate die!

ROGERS'S PLEASURES OF MEMORY.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

At length the genial heat began to shine
With stronger beams in Aries' vernal sign ;
Again the golden day resum'd its right,
And rul'd in just equation with the night.

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

Two months elapsed without any thing of importance taking place. Lavinia's anxiety, as may be imagined, daily increased. Miss Colebrook was gone home, but her brother still continued almost a constant inmate at Fairfield; he anticipated the daily paper, with nearly as much impatience as the rest of the family.

Sir Francis had, two years prior to the present period, commanded the erection

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of a spacious and elegant mansion, on one of the most beautiful spots on his estate, at a mile's distance from Colebrook Hall. This he intended for the residence of his son, when he should marry. It was now nearly finished, and to visit this seat, and witness its advances towards completion, was the favourite lounge of both the families. The spring was now far advanced, and Nature had assumed her loveliest garb; the picturesque scenery that environed Fairfield Lodge, was displayed to the greatest advantage, and, for the *first* time, displayed in vain to the sight of Lavinia. She looked *beyond* them—her ideas were ranging the wide expanse of ocean, uncertain where to fix themselves—her whole soul was absorbed in a horrible suspense, which rendered her insensible to every thing that did not immediately concern her grand interest. She was sorry to see the smiling aspect of renovated vegetation, for it denoted the length of time her Berresford had been absent; the gloomy as-

pect of a lowering winter sky, was more in unison with her feelings than the bright glare of an unobscured horizon ; and she who had been wont to welcome with enthusiasm the most trivial harbinger of reviving nature, now witnessed its perfection with regret.

And now each newspaper awakened new hopes and fears ; they mentioned, confidently, a report of the expedition having landed *somewhere*, and of its *success* ; but the medium through which the intelligence was brought was unsatisfactory ; and the accounts of to-day contradicted those of yesterday. The circumstance of the last reinforcement which had sailed having touched at Minorca, was now frequently alluded to in the papers ; and Lavinia could no longer remain ignorant of their being destined to co-operate with the grand expedition. She persuaded herself that Berresford must have written to her from Minorca or Malta, and that his letter had miscarried, which was certainly very probable. The

mail-coach passed the end of the avenue, leading to Fairfield, every morning between nine and ten o'clock, but the letters for the family were, of course, carried on to L——, the nearest post town, where a servant was always in readiness to receive them, and also a London newspaper, which the Colonel took in daily. How tantalizing was it to Lavinia, to see the vehicle, which might contain intelligence of the first importance, pass her close by each day (as she was watching for it at the park gate), and yet know that she must still be at least an hour and a half before her impatience could be satisfied. Every morning did she wander towards the high road, sometimes accompanied by her father or sister, and wait, in anxious expectation, the passing of the mail, almost fancying that she would be able to find out, by the countenance of the coachman or passengers, whether there was any good news.

One morning, as she was leaning on her father's arm at the door of the porter's lodge,

lodge, awaiting the appearance of the daily conveyance, with her eyes intently fixed upon the turn of the road where it first came in sight, she perceived it whirling down the hill with more than usual velocity; she trembled universally, and caught at the rail near her, for the horses were decked with blue ribbons, the coachman's hat was covered with a large blue bow and streamers, and the guard, equally fine, blew a blast not unlike the trumpet of *victory*! As they approached still nearer, some passengers, on perceiving a lady and gentleman, waved their handkerchiefs from the window, exclaiming—
“ Good news! glorious news!”

The coachman would have flown past, but the Colonel beckoned to him to stop, and, as the man knew him, he instantly drew up.

“ What is the news?” exclaimed the Colonel, almost breathless.

“ Glorious news, your Honour! our expedition has landed in Egypt, and drubbed the
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the *mounseers* ! there has been a bloody battle, but *we* have conquered !” Having said this, the man drove on more furiously than before.

The Colonel turned towards Lavinia, one of whose trembling hands grasped his arm, while the other supported her by the rail. She was alarmingly pale, but spoke not, and her father feared she would faint ; but, clinging to his arm, she entered the lodge, and seating herself, she continued for some minutes with her eyes fixed upon Heaven, while gradually the pallid horror that marked her features was succeeded by an expression of determined calmness. She accepted a glass of water, and shortly after rose, and said she would go home.

They reached Fairfield without either having articulated a single syllable, and Lavinia instantly retired to her chamber, where she shut herself in ; and (while with sickening apprehension, she watched from her window the arrival of the servant who would bring the newspaper) she endeavoured,

voured, by every argument offered by reason and religion, to fortify her mind for whatever it might have to encounter. The words, *bloody battle!* seemed to ring in her ears, and repeated shudderings accompanied the idea. An hour elapsed, *such* an hour as no one can imagine who has never been in a similar situation. Another *half* hour was not completed, when the servant galloped up the avenue. Lavinia did *not* descend, for she knew her father would instantly repair to her with the communication contained in the newspaper, and she *felt* that her *own* room was the fittest place for her at such a moment. Before she imagined it possible the man could have dismounted, Fanny burst into the apartment, followed by the Colonel—she held a *letter* in her hand—Lavinia started forward, and eagerly catching it, perceived the hand-writing and seal of Berresford! She uttered a convulsive cry, and staggering to a chair, she leaned back for some seconds, with her eyes shut, while

while she held the letter prest to her lips. At length the big tears trickled fast from beneath her closed lids, and, heaving a deep sigh, she raised herself, and with trembling fingers broke the seal, and read as follows :—

Banks of the Nile,
March the 8th, 1801.

“ SURROUNDED by victorious troops, still echoing the cry of conquest, I steal a moment from imperious duty, to address my soul’s idol !—the adored being, whose loved idea is the very principle of my existence !—*that* loved idea, which has never for one instant quitted me—no, not even in that awful pause, when an expecting army awaited silently the signal which should command them to gain the shore, and rush at once into the very heat of danger— that pause, big with the fate of those to whom it proved but a prelude to eternity !—no, not even at that eventful moment, did the image of my Lavinia quit me !—
she

she seemed to stand before me, and bid me live for her sake ! and inwardly I ejaculated, ' My God, preserve me for her ! '—He has preserved me, and, I trust, will still preserve me for thee, my dearest love ! Among the incessant shower of the enemy's artillery and musketry, I have escaped without a single scratch ! My kind friend, Colonel Howard (I am grieved to say) has not been equally fortunate ; shortly after we had landed, while we were in the act of ascending a steep sand-hill, the good Colonel received a wound in the leg from a *recoché* shot, which, though almost spent, still retained sufficient force to tear away great part of the flesh, and bruise the knee considerably. I was at no great distance when this took place, and immediately perceived it, though the Colonel himself took no notice of it. The wound bled profusely, and I instantly rode up to him, to know if he was greatly hurt ; but to my enquiries he answered with quickness, that ' it was not a moment to think of self.'

“ I in

“ I inwardly applauded this sentiment, and the brave Colonel gained the top of the hill, leading on with enthusiasm his gallant followers. I could scarcely believe my senses, when I looked down upon the spot we had recently quitted, and conceived the perils we had been exposed to in gaining our (then) position ; but there was no time for rumination. At this moment I perceived that the Colonel turned excessively pale, and reeled upon his horse ; I galloped up to him, and had just time to throw myself off and catch him in my arms, as faint, from loss of blood, and exhausted with pain, his senses forsook him. Having entrusted him to the care of our surgeon (a gallant young man, who had followed us and shared our dangers), I assumed the command of the regiment, which I have the honour still to retain.— But no more of this, the dispatches will contain every particular concerning our successes, by the bearer of which I shall speed this epistle. I dare not write more ;
every

every moment of time is invaluable.—The first thing I did on quitting the field of battle, was to procure materials for writing, and kneeling on the sand, with a drum for my table, I address thee, my love! In a few days you shall receive, if possible, a long letter—God bless you, your father, your sister!

Dearest, best beloved, adieu!

EDWARD COURTNEY BERRESFORD."

It is impossible to describe the sensations of Lavinia and her affectionate friends, as they perused the above—joy, sorrow, pain, and pleasure, alternately displaying their influence on their hearts. Again and again did Lavinia read it, and only ceased to gaze upon it, at her father's intimation that he held the newspaper in his hand, which contained a particular and circumstantial account of the ever-memorable events which took place in Egypt
on

on the 8th of March 1801. With an interest which scarcely allowed them to breathe, did the sisters attend, while their father read aloud, a detail of circumstances, the bare recital of which made a chilling coldness thrill through their veins. But what was almost sufficient to annihilate the comfort derived from a certainty of Berresford's having escaped the perils of that day, was the expectation of a second battle, which, it appeared from the dispatches, was almost certain. But Lavinia endeavoured to check her apprehension, by reflecting on the goodness of that Providence which had hitherto preserved her lover, and in that gracious Power she firmly confided, and awaited impatiently further accounts from Egypt, while she tried to persuade herself that it was *possible* a second battle might *not* take place.

When Colebrook heard that a letter had been received from Major Berresford, (after having been assured of his safety) he asked Fanny, though in a voice, and
with

with a look which shewed that he anticipated his answer, if this account of Major Berresford was not sufficient to authorize him to claim the performance of her promise?

“ Ah, don't mention it,” cried Fanny ;
“ I will not hear of it till all the fighting is over.”

When Lavinia was retired for the night, it was long ere she could succeed in banishing the fearful images which were ready to present themselves to her mind. At length she dropped asleep ; but horrible was the scene she beheld in her dreams. She imagined herself in a similar situation with the wretched Cornelia, the ill-fated wife of Pompey, who, while standing on the deck of the ship, from which the agents of Ptolemy had decoyed her husband, beheld him stabbed by the inhuman Achilles. Lavinia imagined herself standing on the deck of the Mondovi, which, she had read in the newspaper, was the centre ship stationed to cover the landing during the
disem-

disembarkation of the troops in Egypt. From this situation she fancied she beheld innumerable boats, crowded with soldiers; having for some time sought in vain for Berresford, she suddenly perceived him, but, instead of his regimentals, he was habited in a Roman costume. He saw her, and waved one hand to her, while with the other he pointed to the shore. She could behold his fascinating smile, and the expression of unutterable love which was wont to beam in his eyes when fixed upon her—that expression which denotes an excess of emotion, almost oppressive to the orbs which discover it, and which gives to them an air of languor, that seems as if they would dissolve in extacy. While he still gazed upon her, she fancied that she suddenly beheld a ruffian, in the Egyptian garb, start up and plunge a dagger into the heart of her lover! when, instantly, all the men in the boat flew upon him, and pierced him with their bayonets! Shrieking with horror, Lavinia

nia awoke, and was some minutes before she could in any way recover herself, while her tears continued to stream in torrents.

How did she bless Heaven that it was *but* a dream ! and one by no means astonishing, but, on the contrary, such as might naturally be produced by a simple association of ideas. It was in approaching the Egyptian coast, that Pompey had met his fate, and this recollection had confused itself with the landing of our expedition, to Lavinia's faculties, when bewildered by sleep ; and, with the inconsistency ever incident to dreams, she had decked Berresford in the Roman habit, and fancied Achillas seated among English soldiers, who, following his example, had pointed their bayonets at their own leader's breast. Even had it been possible to have augured any thing from this incoherent delusion, it would not have affected Lavinia, when once her senses had regained their full powers ; for she had not a particle of superstition in
her

her composition—and indeed it would have puzzled even an old *Scotch wife* to have drawn any connected inference from such an obscure origin.

It would be wearying the reader with a repetition of similar descriptions, were I to particularize the sensations and fluctuating emotions endured by Lavinia (and indeed by all the Fairfield family) for several successive days, when they were again gratified by particular accounts from the scene of action. The newspaper which announced that a second engagement had taken place in Egypt on the 13th of March, was accompanied, as before, by a letter from Berresford. It contained an assurance of his perfect safety, and of his having again escaped unhurt; this intelligence, interspersed with passionate expressions of fondness, constituted the whole letter, which was very short, having been written immediately after the action, and terminated suddenly, in order to dispatch it by the very earliest opportunity ;

tunity ; but Berresford promised to write again in a few days ; and this he faithfully performed, for the very next dispatches which arrived from Egypt brought a long letter for Lavinia. It was as follows :—

Camp before Alexandria,

March 16, 1801.

“ I PROMISED, my dearest love, to write the first opportunity, and I find that dispatches depart for England to-morrow ; I therefore dedicate this night to you. I will not shock your gentle nature, by a particular description of all that has past since I first addressed you from this comfortless region. The horrors of war is truly an unseemly subject, to sully the sheet destined to meet your eye ; yet my mind is so thoroughly impregnated with the images of what has so recently occurred, that I find it impossible wholly to exclude the subject from my thoughts. Oh, my Lavinia ! this mutual slaughter is a

sorry trade—how grievous that it should be *indispensable*! and, victor or vanquished, we are necessarily condemned to suffer; for whatever *outward* demonstration of triumph may be exhibited in our appearance (and which it is a duty to assume, in order to encourage and keep up the spirits of our army), who can rejoice *internally* over the bleeding bodies of faithful friends and intimate acquaintances? I have, as yet, thank God! lost no particular friend, but many have perished with whom I have frequently participated the pleasures of conviviality, and enjoyed the harmony of society. My good friend, Colonel Howard, still continues in a very precarious state, and will be unable, for some time, to resume the command of the regiment, *if* at all—these are the words of our surgeon, who is extremely apprehensive lest this inauspicious climate should render his wound alarming in its effects, though it was originally not serious—I trust his fears are unfounded. Oh! how should I grieve,
to

to leave the honoured relics of this true friend, to moulder in the burning sands of Africa! Yet, surely, all who perish in their country's cause, ensure a passport to the realms above! . This is an ancient superstition, and I am determined to adopt it, since it is so consolatory. No wonder that I should be susceptible of a degree of *superstition*, when I am breathing the air of that country where it once reigned with such absolute dominion.

“ On recurring to the foregoing part of this doleful epistle, I feel ashamed of the very *unsoldier*-like terms in which it is couched—I would not one of my *cloth* should see it for all I am worth; they would certainly say I was a *chicken-hearted* fellow, and had got the blue devils! In good truth, I know not how to excuse it; but there is something in the silence of the night (interrupted only by the cry of ‘all well!’ from the sentinel), which affects one's feelings, and renders them painfully alive to melancholy impressions;

and this it is, I imagine, which dictated the sombre style of the above. But you must forget it, my Lavinia, and I promise the remainder shall be less stupid.

“Could I find time to look around me, and recall the variety of sacred and fabulous history connected with this region, what a chain of ideas would involuntarily revolve in my imagination! In many of the articles which we make daily use of, may be seen the objects of adoration to the ancient inhabitants of this country; for though Iris and Osiris were their chief and original deities, they have descended progressively to idolize the most insignificant and ridiculous things, even to the worshipping of leeks and onions. I remember I once greatly offended a Welsh gentleman (who I met when I was on a visit to Lady Maria, at her seat in North Wales), by ludicrously observing, that I doubted not, that the strong partiality his countrymen still retained for the leek, owed its origin to their having, like the Egyptians,

Egyptians, in their less enlightened days, considered it as an hallowed object. The irritable Cambrian was highly incensed at my hazarding such a supposition, and began instantly, with great vehemence, to explain the real cause of their predilection for their *odoriferous* favourite, protesting that the ancient *Cambro-Britons* had never descended to the absurdities that Eastern nations had been known to practise. I could not forbear a smile at the warmth of his *amor patriæ*; and begged his pardon, imputing my mistake to ignorance.

“ You doubtless already know, that the Apix (a living ox) was also an object of the highest veneration to the Egyptians, notwithstanding which, they only allowed it to live a certain time, when, with great form, he was put to death by his own priests in the Fountain of the Sun; and, with great marks of grief, they immediately looked out for another, who was to be of the same race, and marked after the same manner, having a white half moon

on the right side.—Truly I think the *moon* must in a great measure have affected these poor people, before they could have degenerated to acting such absurdities. How much more rational, as well as beneficial, is our *modern* way of *immortalizing* our oxen, by salting them down for the support of our navy and army! To attempt to enumerate the various objects, animated and inanimated, which at different periods have been adored by the Egyptians, would be as vain as searching for the source of the Nile. Strange! that the true religion should at length have been propagated, in the very region where the most egregious error had so long obscured every ray of rationality, respecting the worship of a Supreme Being. Surely nothing can speak higher in its favour, than its having forced its way through an almost impervious cloud of imbecility and superstition, two of the most potent enemies to moderation and reason. But enough of this—let me banish Egypt, and
all

all its *plagues*, from my mind ; and though my reluctant body must remain, let me transport my soul to thee, my love ! Let me picture thee gazing on the lines I now trace—I kiss them, my Lavinia ! I know that you will also—oh how I envy them ! I wish it was in my power to send you my journal, which I wrote during our voyage on purpose for you ; but it is still on board ship with the rest of my papers—I hope soon to procure it.

“ I wrote to you from Minorca and Malta, but as I was obliged to entrust my letters to the care of those who remained behind, to send by the first opportunity, I much fear they may not have reached you. We esteem ourselves particularly fortunate, in having joined the force under Sir Ralph Abercromby’s command, in time to share in the glory of this expedition ; for as we sailed from England so much later than him, we were very apprehensive of not being a party concerned. At daybreak the dispatches are to be closed ; I must

therefore bid you farewell, my Lavinia! I would tell you to write, but God only knows if your letter would find me here—yet you had as well write; perhaps it may. Oh if I could but see a few lines traced by your hand, it would be balm to my heart! Almost five wretched long and lingering months, have I spent without hearing ought concerning you!—my mind wearies itself with constantly recalling the past—my imagination is fatigued, for want of something substantial to dwell upon—it is continually busied in empty visions and uncertain speculations, springing from itself alone—one single line from you would give it something to feed upon. But, alas! I feel a sensation bordering on despair, when I recollect how long, how *dreadfully* long a period must elapse before I can possibly hear from you!—I must write no more, for I am relapsing into melancholy. Oh do not forget me, Lavinia!—do not forget your soldier! who, in every chance and change,
never

never ceases to think of you!—In the dear, dear wilds of Fairfield, call me to your mind, my love!—In the silent hour of contemplation, oh think of him, my Lavinia! who ‘in the battle’s heat remembers’ thee!

“God bless thee, dearest! a thousand times bless thee and thine! Rest assured no opportunity shall occur without your hearing of

Your ever faithful

EDWARD COURTNEY BERRSFORD.”

Lavinia perused this letter with varying emotion. She plainly perceived that Berresford was dejected, by the style in which the first part was expressed, and that he had forced himself to assume a lively strain in the subsequent lines, for fear of alarming her, and adding to the weight of her anxiety.—“Yet he is well,” she exclaimed; “he has again escaped, blessed be

God! and surely it is no subject for astonishment, that a feeling heart should be oppressed at the sight of death and destruction!"

Again and again did she press her lips to the lines Berresford said he had kissed. The Colonel and Fanny were always made acquainted with the contents of Major Berresford's letters, in which they were too much interested, not to expect with anxiety. The account given in the newspapers, of the action of the 13th of March, was not perfectly satisfactory, and Colonel Fairfield thought it could not be decidedly called a victory. He perceived that much remained to be done; his opinion he (of course) did not communicate to Lavinia—but she herself had made nearly similar reflections on the subject. The Colonel fancied he perceived throughout Major Berresford's letter, a concealed oppression of spirits, and he believed it to be produced by the indecisive manner in which the last action had terminated.

With

With unabated, nay encreased anxiety, did Lavinia await farther intelligence. She did, indeed, obey Berresford's injunction, that she should think of him—for she never thought of any thing else, and found no room in her imagination for any other object but himself, and prayers for his safety.

CHAP. VIII.

Oh thou eternal Arbiter of things !

Be thy great bidding done ; for who am I,

To question thy appointment ?

AKENSIDE.

SEVERAL days past, each bringing with them an augmentation of anxious impatience and apprehension. Lavinia could now scarcely bear the society of her father and sister, and was frequently obliged to retire to her chamber, and seek, by pious reasoning, to allay her anguish.

One morning, having breakfasted earlier than usual, the Colonel said he would ride to L—— himself, and fetch the paper and letters, 'should there be any ; and
having

having some business to transact there, he set out some time before the mail had past Fairfield. As soon as he was gone, Lavinia said she would take a short walk, but declined the offer of Fanny and Colebrook to accompany her. According to custom, she wandered to the park gate, to watch for the mail. She had never missed one day since the first intelligence had been received from Egypt, so that her person was become familiar to the coachman of the mail-coach, who justly imagined, from the expression of her countenance, that she had some great interest at heart. Lavinia had just reached the gate, when she beheld the mail whirling along, again decked in all the ensignias of victory ! Unconsciously she extended her trembling arms, with a beseeching look, towards the coachman, who instantly comprehending her, stopped, and pulling a newspaper from his pocket (which he had brought loose from London), he good naturedly

naturedly threw it to her, exclaiming—
“ You will see all the news in that, Miss.”

Lavinia cast a grateful look towards him, and catching up the paper, hastened (as fast as her trembling limbs would allow) home, when, reaching her chamber, she extended the paper, and searched, with an eagerness which defeated its purpose, for the accounts from Egypt. At length she perceived, in large letters, “ Egypt !” and immediately under, “ Grand and Decisive Victory !” Her hand shook so violently, that it was impossible she could read one word while holding it ; she therefore spread it out on the table, and leaning over, she slightly cast her eyes on three or four columns of long details, which she past over in search of the gazette, containing the return of killed and wounded, which she imagined would be subjoined. She was not mistaken, for there was a very long and circumstantial return of all the killed, wounded, and missing, since the
first

first landing in Egypt. With agonizing apprehension, she ran her eyes over them—but when she at last caught sight of the number of the regiment she was most anxious about, she involuntarily shut her eyes, afraid to look farther; but this was but the emotion of a moment, when, opening them, she read, “wounded! ——— regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander Howard, *not* dangerously; Major Edward Courtney Berresford, *severely*.” In an instant Lavinia’s eyes were rivetted in horror upon the word *severely*, when, staggering back some paces, she fell upon the bed, which fortunately ~~was not~~. For many minutes she continued in a state of stupefaction, though not wholly insensible.

Fanny, who had observed her sister enter the house, now came to seek her. She was alarmed, on entering her chamber, to behold her extended on the bed; but imagining it was illness which had obliged her to lay down, she approached her, quite

quite unprepared for the shock she was to receive. She advanced on tip-toe, uncertain whether Lavinia was not asleep, and said, in a whisper—"Are you ill, my dear Lavinia?"

Lavinia's arm was thrown across her eyes, and concealed great part of her face, but her sister could still perceive the deadly paleness which overspread it. Advancing close to her, Fanny repeated her question in a low voice; Lavinia suddenly withdrew her arm from her eyes, and fixed them on her sister, with a vacant stare.

"Oh Heaven!" exclaimed Fanny, in an agony of terror, throwing herself on her knees by the bedside; "Oh Heaven, Lavinia! what is the matter? speak to me, for God's sake!"

Lavinia slowly turned herself off the bed, and seated herself on the side of it; she prest her hand to her forehead for a few seconds, while the vacancy of her countenance gradually gave way to an expression

pression of rooted despair, and shuddering violently, she murmured to herself "*severely!*"

"What did you say, Lavinia?" cried Fanny, shuddering also without knowing why; "tell me what was it you said?"

Lavinia suddenly turned towards her, and grasping her arm with one hand, she pointed with the other to the newspaper. Fanny's eyes followed the direction of her sister's finger, and she at once conceived the cause of the present scene; but she was fixed to the spot, nor could she muster sufficient courage to seek for a confirmation of her fears. She clasped the knees of her sister, and gazed, with streaming eyes, upon her horror-struck countenance.

Lavinia did not shed a tear; and for near a quarter of an hour did the sisters remain in this wretched situation, without either uttering a word. Fanny, in some measure recollecting herself, thought of procuring some restorative for Lavinia, yet she was uncertain how to act, for she perceived that

that she had the full use of her senses, and she was aware, that nothing she could administer would relieve her mental anguish. Hope, which is never long dormant in the human breast, now prompted Fanny to take up the newspaper; she soon perceived the intelligence she sought, and her sanguine mind felt as if transported to Heaven, when she found that Major Berresford was *only wounded*, for she had in truth imagined he was killed. She flew to her sister, and clasping her in her arms, exclaimed with enthusiasm—"He is only wounded! he is only wounded! my dear, dear sister, be comforted—I am sure he will recover—he is only wounded, and that not *mortally*, we may be certain, or it would have been mentioned."

Lavinia seemed unconscious of the ardent pressure of her sister, and her eyes continued immovably fixed on the ground, as she pronounced, in a deep hollow tone, "*severely!*"

Fanny shuddered, and clasping her still
closer,

closer, repeated — “ But not mortally ! Oh Lavinia, look at me ! for God’s sake, look at me ! ”

Lavinia slowly raised her eyes, and fixed them on her sister ; and after regarding her for some seconds, she shook her head mournfully, and kissing the tears from her cheek, she exclaimed—“ Poor Fanny !

Fanny’s tears redoubled, but no drop of sorrow moistened the cheek of her sister. Thus did they continue, till the chamber door was opened with precipitation, and Colonel Fairfield entered. Anxiety and apprehension were strongly marked on his countenance ; in his hand he held an open letter. On beholding the situation of his daughters, he exclaimed, with painful surprise — “ Who has told her ? ”

Fanny pointed to the newspaper on the table—the Colonel required no farther explanation, and approaching Lavinia, he said—“ My dear child, I bring you comfort ! here is a letter from Captain Percival,

val, our Berresford's particular friend, and dictated by Berresford himself!"

Lavinia pressed her father's hand, and said, in the most beseeching tone—"Do not deceive me, dearest father!"

"God forbid, my child! I would not deceive you for the world—here is evidence of what I say." The Colonel shewed her the letter, but did not give it into her hand, which was eagerly extended to receive it. "Compose yourself; my love!" continued he.

"I am quite composed, indeed I am."

"Well, well, let me read it to you."

"Oh!" exclaimed Lavinia, passionately, and raising her hands and eyes to Heaven, "there is something I should not see! I know he is very, very bad!"

"Lavinia!" exclaimed her father in a calm tone.

This was enough; she instantly recollected herself, and turning towards him with a look of entreaty, she said—"Forgive me—I am very foolish."

"Now

"Now my Lavinia is herself!" cried the Colonel, "and I have still greater comfort for you!" saying this, he turned down a part of the letter, and holding it before her eyes, continued—"There is one line from Berresford himself—but mind it is written with the left hand; but that must not alarm you."

Lavinia seized the letter, and read—"Fear not for me, dearest love! I am in no danger." Lavinia read this three times, before she could persuade herself that she was not deceived, when, throwing herself on her knees, she ejaculated—"My God, I thank thee!" and burst into tears.

I shall now present the reader with Captain Percival's letter, the principal part of which Colonel Fairfield read aloud to his daughters, merely omitting such passages as he thought too affecting to meet their ears, until they had regained a greater degree of composure. The line written by Major Berresford was the first which met the eye
on

on opening the sheet ; underneath were as follows :—

March 21, 1801.

“ I am commissioned by my dear friend, Major Berresford, to inform you, Sir, and your family, in the most satisfactory manner, with his situation and state of health. I am at this moment sitting beside him—he has received a musket ball in his right shoulder ; but I am most happy to add, that it has been extracted, and the wound now bears as favourable an appearance as his most anxious friends can wish. He desires I will beg you to request Miss Fairfield to receive as a proof of how little he is inconvenienced, the first line on this page, which he insisted upon writing with his left hand.

“ As I have the honour of being wholly in Major Berresford's confidence, I must presume to add, that I believe he suffers
much

much more on account of the distress he apprehends may be experienced by you and yours, than from the effects of his wound.

“As I am confident a minute detail will be interesting to you, I shall, as far as I am competent, relate the events of this day (at least all that concerned Major Berresford). This information I received from a brother officer, who had an opportunity of witnessing our Major's conduct throughout the whole business, which was not the case with myself; for as I command the light company, we were brigaded together with those of some other regiments, and I was consequently separated from my own corps.

“Yesterday morning we perceived, at a great distance in the Lake Mareotis, troops of camels, and innumerable other animals, passing towards Alexandria; but from the extreme haze always floating over this exhaling lake, we were unable to distinguish any thing clearly, but we imagined it to be

be Menou. We afterwards learned that our supposition was just, for it was indeed Menou, with a reinforcement of nine thousand men from Cairo; he reached Alexandria at noon, and immediately assumed the command of the whole army.

“ This morning, before day-break, we were aroused by a firing on our left. Our commander in chief conceived it at first to be a feint, but it was only the forerunner of a grand attack upon our front, from the centre to the right, with an army of fourteen thousand men. A most obstinate and bloody battle ensued, the particulars of which will, of course, be published.

“ I have been led on, imperceptibly, to say more than I had intended upon the subject, but the events of the day are still so predominant in my mind, that I could not forbear touching on them. The brigade to which our regiment was attached, maintained their ground in the most exposed situation. What a horrible scene
did

did the daylight discover!—I shall never forget it. Just as the dawn allowed objects to become visible, Captain O'Carryl (who commanded one of our centre companies) was within a few paces of the Major, on whom his eyes were fixed, when he observed him suddenly start, and catch at his sword with his left hand, in which he grasped it, while his right felt motionless by his side!

“The Major was in the act of giving the word of command, at the moment he received the wound; he finished the order, without his voice changing in the smallest degree; nor did he even cast his eyes upon the wounded limb; the only emotion visible was a sudden flush on his face, as erecting himself on his saddle, with all his native grace, he assumed an air of the most undaunted firmness and resolution. As he galloped up the line, the blood trickled from his elbow, and his progress might be traced by crimson drops. O'Carryl says he never felt so much, as while contemplating

plating this wounded hero. In a moment the Major galloped back, and as he advanced, O'Carryl observed him holding his sword between his teeth, while, with his left hand, he endeavoured to disengage his sash. He had succeeded in disentangling it, just as he reached him, when, holding it out, he cried—' Here, O'Carryl! assist me to bind this tight round my arm—Make haste, my good fellow !' he continued, with impatience, as O'Carryl carefully put the sash round, fearful of hurting him—' Tighter, tighter—you don't hurt me,' cried the Major; and before it was half completed, added, ' There, there! that will do ;' but O'Carryl detained him, until he had contrived to fasten one end of the sash over his shoulder, so as to form a sling, when exclaiming—' You've done it famously !' he hastened to give the word for the firing to recommence, which at that moment became expedient.

“ The battle lasted some hours after this; the conflict was long, obstinate, and fluctuating,

tuating, but at length terminated, in leaving us complete masters of the field. All this time the Major continued indefatigable; O'Carryl watched his countenance, fearing it would be impossible for him to hold out, after the loss of blood he had sustained; but instead of being pale, his face was flushed with crimson, which seemed fixed in his cheeks; he appeared animated in the extreme during the whole business, excepting for the space of about a minute, just as he learned that our brave Commander in Chief was dangerously wounded! As the intelligence caught his ear, our Major's countenance suddenly fell; but he soon resumed his encouraging demeanor.

"When the enemy had retreated, and there seemed scarcely any more left to be done, O'Carryl accosted the Major, and entreated him to think of himself; but the Major did not attend to him, but continued with the men till the last, when he deliberately expressed his gratitude to the whole corps, for the gallant conduct which

had distinguished it, and his **extreme satisfaction**, at having had the honour of commanding men, who had, by the performances of that day, secured to themselves immortal glory ! Having said this, he dismissed them himself ; and riding slowly towards a tent, which was just pitched, he called to O'Carryl (who had followed him) to help him to dismount. His support was indeed necessary, for, on attempting to stand, the Major staggered, and would have fallen to the ground, but for the extended arms of O'Carryl. His colour now totally forsook him, and a livid paleness succeeded. With the assistance of another officer (for they were all now crowding round the Major) he was conveyed into the tent.

“ At this moment I myself joined them — I will not attempt to describe my feelings, when I beheld Berresford's lifeless body stretched on the ground ! I had just sufficient recollection, to go instantly in search of medical aid, though I was uncertain

certain at the moment whether he yet existed. It was some time before I could find a surgeon disengaged, for, alas ! there was but too much occupation for them all at that moment. I at length succeeded ; and our own surgeon, a young man of great skill, added to his fame by extracting, very dexterously, a musket ball from the Major's shoulder. It had entered at the elbow, and after splintering (in a slight degree) the bone of the arm, lodged in the shoulder.

“ My friend recovered his senses before the operation was performed. The moment he became conscious, he enquired for me ; I was close to him, and answered for myself—‘ My dear Percival,’ he cried, ‘ my wound is a mere scratch ; but my friends in England will be alarmed : write a few lines to go with the dispatches, and assure them it is of no consequence ; address them to Colonel Fairfield. If you have time, write also to my aunt and father.’

“The latter part of this request I have still to comply with; I must therefore conclude this, in which I have endeavoured to be as particular as possible. Major Berresford desires me again to say, he is as well as he possibly can expect to be, and entreats his affectionate friends not to grieve, as this accident may perhaps be the means of his returning to his native country sooner than might otherwise have been the case. Hoping that this account may alleviate, nay terminate, all fearful apprehension,

I remain,

Sir,

Your very humble servant,

HENRY PERCIVAL.”

Colonel Fairfield, in reading Captain Percival's letter, merely omitted that part which mentioned the profuse bleeding of Berresford's wound, and the account
of

of his having fainted when he alighted from his horse: but Lavinia did not seem satisfied with having the letter read to her; she still naturally imagined, that there was something concealed from her; and her father perceiving her thoughts by the expression of her countenance, conceived it would be better to allow her to peruse it herself. It is almost needless to say, that Lavinia was greatly affected, by this particular detail of her lover's heroism; but when her feelings became less tumultuous, she determined (as was her constant practice) to consider the business in the very best light possible, and, as far as it was practicable, banish the anticipation of greater evil. She felt so relieved from her first agony, on reading the account given in the newspaper of Berresford's wound, that her present feelings were comparative happiness; and what more than any thing contributed to reconcile her, was the hope alluded to in the latter part of the letter, that the accident so deplored

might ultimately bring Berresford home; at any rate, she was certain he could not be exposed to any further danger, even should hostilities continue, which at present seemed improbable; and a dreadful weight was removed from her heart by this suggestion.

Thus did she ingeniously seek for comfort, endeavouring to reconcile her mind to the ills she was doomed to endure. She resolved, too, by a calm demeanor, and cheerful confidence of future good, to enliven the spirits of her family, whose peace had lately been so greatly disturbed by solicitude for her. How different had been Lavinia's feelings, had she heard an undisguised statement of her Berresford's sufferings—had she known, that though he did in reality write a line to her, the moment that the pen fell from his hand, he fainted! this trifling exertion being too great for his exhausted strength. His wound, indeed, was what was least to be feared, but the loss of blood he had sustained,

tained, had so debilitated his whole frame, as to render the consequences most alarming. No greater proof could have been given of Major Berresford's magnanimity, and the astonishing influence his mind possessed over his body, than his having continued, apparently without inconvenience, to retain his situation in the field of battle. But so superior was the strength of his intellectual powers to every corporeal suffering, that he was elevated above every subordinate interest, in his inflexible determination of serving his country to the very last moment of his existence, without faltering one moment in the glorious cause !

Possent quia posse videntur !

This it was which animated his soul to a pitch of enthusiasm—this it was which caused his cheeks to glow with the fervour of agitation (instead of being marked with the paleness generally produced by great

loss of blood)—and this it was which prevented his fainting while in the field, and which, had he possessed one particle less of mental energy, would inevitably have been the consequence. With the necessity for action, subsided this godlike resolution; the ethereal qualities of the mind gradually sunk into repose, and human nature asserted her long disputed rights, as Major Berresford fainted in the supporting arms of his brother officers. The first idea which presented itself to his returning reason, was the horror Lavinia would experience when she learnt that he was wounded; and the first words he spoke was an enquiry for Captain Percival—he fainted several times while the surgeon was extracting the ball from his shoulder.

The operation being completed, and restoratives administered to recall fleeting life, the surgeon quitted him, promising to return in a short time. The moment his back was turned, Berresford, in a whisper, said to Captain Percival (who

was

was still kneeling by his side), "Get materials for writing."

Percival instantly quitted the tent to obey him, and left Captain O'Carryl with the Major, whose attention to him was not even excelled by the unremitting solicitude of Berresford's own servant, who was also with him, and who had never ceased shedding tears, from the moment he beheld his master's sufferings. Percival soon returned, with pen, ink, and paper. The Major beckoned him to come close to him, and holding out his left hand, took the paper and laid it beside him, and then motioned for the pen.

Percival stared at him, and began to think his intellects were affected; he exclaimed, in a soothing tone—"My dear friend, it is impossible you can write!"

Berresford spake not, but still motioned for the pen, with a look that Percival could not withstand. Berresford then hastily scrawled the line, which he knew would be a balm to his Lavinia's heart, when,

dropping the pen, his arm fell heavily beside him, and Percival perceived he had again fainted. In the utmost apprehension, he flew to summon the surgeon, who was not long in repairing to the Major, who was speedily, by his assistance, restored to sensibility. The same ideas still prevailing, Berresford then entreated his friend to write a few lines to each of those whom he knew would be tortured till they heard of him, and begged he would be more particular in his account to Colonel Fairfield. Having swallowed a composing cordial, he shortly after fell asleep, to the sincere satisfaction of his anxious friends.

Captain Percival seized this opportunity of enquiring minutely from Captain O'Carryl the particulars connected with the distressing accident; and while Berresford still slept (which he did for some hours), he penned the epistle which has before been inserted, and also a few lines to the Honourable Mr. Berresford, and Lady Maria Courtney.

Several

Several times during the night the surgeon stepped in, and still found the Major sleeping. This repose was produced by the medicine he had given him; and though it had taken effect, Mr. Lawrie was by no means pleased with the state of his patient's pulse, which was alarmingly low. Soon after daybreak the Major awoke; he was perfectly sensible, and seemed a little refreshed by his slumber; but as the day advanced, the heat became almost insufferable, and so extremely oppressive to the invalid, as to be highly dangerous. Under these circumstances, the only measure to be adopted, was to get the sufferer on board ship as soon as possible, as Mr. Lawrie protested he could not answer for his life another day, if he remained in his then situation. A kind of litter, which had been constructed to transport the wounded, was procured, on which the Major was laid, and three of his own soldiers, with Simmons (his servant), bore it, while four of the officers, by whom he

was

was so justly beloved, attended, two on each side, supporting an awning over him, to shade him from the merciless beams of the sun. In this order was he conveyed to the water's edge, when the litter, bearing so invaluable a burthen, was placed in a boat, still attended by Captains Percival and O'Carryl, with the surgeon. They were then conducted to one of the men of war lying nearest the shore, the Captain of which was a friend of Major Berresford's. With less inconvenience and suffering than could have been expected, was Berresford laid upon a comfortable bed, in a commodious state-room, which the Captain immediately appropriated to his use. Mr. Lawrie then committed his charge to the surgeon of the man of war, and departed, accompanied by Captain Percival and Captain O'Carryl, all promising, that the first hour they could call their own, should bring them to the Major's bedside.

Berresford continued without any visible

ble change, except an increase of languor, until the twenty-eight of the month, that day on which the ever-lamented General Abercromby breathed his last, and his gallant spirit flew to claim the reward due to a staunch patriot and unconquered hero !

Berresford was extremely depressed by the communication of this melancholy event, and he thought, at the moment, " I shall soon follow him ! "

The next day Captain Percival and Mr. Lawrie came to see him (they had been once before since they had first left him on board). There was a heavy gloom hanging over almost every individual, produced by the recent death of their leader ; and when these two solicitous friends beheld the altered countenance of Major Berresford, they felt an inward conviction, that he was doomed, in death, as in life, to follow the brave old General.

Mr. Lawrie examined his wound, but there he found no cause for alarm ; but the extreme debility of his patient aroused

all

all his apprehension. He was aware that this was encreased, nay, chiefly produced by the oppressive climate; and he doubted not, that if he could be conveyed to a more salubrious atmosphere, he would speedily recover.

While the good surgeon was revolving these ideas, Berresford was requesting Percival to write again to his friends in England a favourable account of him.

Mr. Lawrie interrupted him by saying—“I hardly think, Percival, you will be justified in so doing—I am sorry to say I see no amendment whatever in the Major's general system, although the wound is certainly healing.”

Percival looked very serious, and Berresford, smiling languidly, said (with an effort at unconcern)—“Will you see my bones transported to one of the Catacombs, Lawrie?”

The surgeon shook his head, and answered—“I would much rather see you set sail for some more propitious climate—you will
will

will never get well while you breathe the tainted air of Africa."

Percival, at these words, turned quickly towards Berresford, and exclaimed, in accents of pleasure—"There is a cutter to sail for England to-morrow, or next day."

Berresford did not immediately speak; but in a few moments, looking with an enquiring glance at Lawrie, he said—"Nothing should induce me to quit this country, if I thought there was a possibility of my being able again to perform my duty with the regiment."

"My dear Sir," exclaimed the surgeon, in amazement, "how can you talk of such a thing?—take my word for it, Major, you will not be able to join your regiment while you remain in Egypt; and I candidly tell you, I will not answer for your life, if you continue here—take my advice, and get to England as soon as possible; or, if you are averse to undertaking so long a voyage, go to Malta."

"No," returned Berresford; "if I go,

it shall be to England." A faint flush suffused his cheek, and his heart bounded at the mere idea.

Percival caught at his half consent, and declared he would immediately apply for his leave of absence (which would of course be instantly granted), and then go himself on board the cutter, and see if comfortable accommodation could be found for him.

After some farther conversation on the subject, the Major consented to the wishes of his friends, and they rose to depart. As he was quitting him, Captain Percival said—"Then, I suppose, there will be no occasion for my writing to your friends?"

"By all means," replied the Major; "for as the letter will go over-land, they will probably receive it some time before I arrive—I should wish them to be prepared to see me." He paused, and then added, with a sigh, "They will think me sadly altered."

"Not so, my dear Major," cried Lawrie;

"I trust

"I trust you will be quite well by the time they see you."

They now departed, promising to return early in the morning, if no change in the military operations (and none was expected) occurred to prevent them; the intervening time was to be employed in furthering preparations for his voyage to England.

The Major was much exhausted after this long conference, and his spirits were extremely agitated at the idea of returning to his native clime—he might have exclaimed, in the words of Lyttleton—

Oh native Isle, fair Freedom's happiest seat !
At thought of thee my bounding pulses beat ;
At thought of thee my heart impatient burns,
And all my country on my soul returns !

He refused not some drops of laudanum, which the surgeon of the ship advised, and an artificial composure lulled the tumult of his thoughts.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

"How expectation loads the wings of Time!"
So sung the Bard of old, who woo'd the *Nine* /
Tho' years unnumber'd since have past away,
Still expectation, languid with delay,
Relentless loads the wings of weary Time,
Still subject for the Poet's tuneful rhyme;
Makes minutes hours, hours days, days weeks, weeks years,
And twelve sad months a whole Millennium years!

E. P.

SOME days past without bringing the anxious inhabitants of Fairfield any intelligence from Egypt; but in the newspapers they daily read farther details of the late action, in which the gallant conduct of Major Berresford was mentioned, and
highly

highly extolled. With what exultation did Lavinia peruse the eulogium of her beloved ! and how did she felicitate herself upon being the chosen idol of such a heart as his !

She had written Lady Maria a particular account of the contents of Captain Percival's letter, and had received from her an answer, in which she alluded to her nephew's conduct, in the most enthusiastic terms of exultation ; and concluded her panegyric, by protesting, that the highest eulogium she could pass on him, was to declare, that his heroism on the late occasion was merely *consistent* with a character so exalted in every respect. She mentioned how uneasy his family had been, notwithstanding her brother, as well as herself, had received some lines from Captain Percival, declaring Berresford to be in no danger ; but, Lady Maria added, that she had shown them Lavinia's last letter, which had greatly appeased their fears.

Another week elapsed, when, as Colonel
6 Fairfield,

Fairfield, his daughters, and young Colebrook, were seated at the breakfast-table, a servant entered with the newspaper, and a letter for the Colonel. The moment Lavinia caught sight of it, she knew it was from Egypt; for she perceived, by the colour of the paper, that it had been fumigated; she fixed her eyes upon her father, and prepared to watch every turn of his countenance, as he perused its contents. She thought it an age while he was carefully opening it, fearful of tearing the written part. Colonel Fairfield cast his eyes hastily over it, impatient to learn whether it was of a nature to permit him to read it aloud. The complacent expression of his features convinced the anxious Lavinia that there was pleasing intelligence, and she exclaimed (unable longer to restrain her impatience)—“ Oh say how is he ? ”

The Colonel laid down the letter, and, looking at her with an aspect of tenderness and heartfelt satisfaction, he said—

“ I know,

“ I know, my Lavinia, you are a philosopher in adversity ; I am almost certain that you will be equally so in prosperity.”

Lavinia made no answer, but fixed her eyes upon the letter, with an expression of undisguised eagerness to know its contents.—The Colonel no longer deferred gratifying her, and read aloud—

March 31.

“ I am commissioned by Major Berresford to acquaint you, Sir, that his wound bears the most favourable appearance, and is in a great measure healed ; but as it is the opinion of his medical friends, that the air of this climate will retard his complete restoration to health, he has consented to comply with their solicitations (joined to those to whom his welfare is most truly dear), and has obtained unlimited leave of absence from the Commander in Chief, and embarked this morning

morning on board a cutter, which is to sail for England to-night or to-morrow morning. I accompanied him on board, and can assure you that he has very comfortable accommodations, himself being the only passenger (of note). He is attended by his servant, a man of tried fidelity, and who has ever paid the most unremitting attention to his master.

“ I doubt not but the sea voyage, and change of climate, will completely restore the health of my dear friend, before you see him, a gratification, I must own, I envy you. I took leave of him this morning, with feelings I cannot describe—he is the dearest friend I have on earth ; and did he possess but *half* the virtues and endowments which he does, my regard for him would be amply justified.

“ Colonel Howard (who, I understand, is also a friend of your's) is greatly recovered ; he is now at Rosetta, with most of the wounded. When you receive this, our friend will, most probably, have performed

formed great part of his voyage; and a short time will, I doubt not, restore him to those he is so ardently attached to, for whom, I must assure you (as I participate in all his feelings), I experience the most animated interest.

I remain, Sir,

With true regard,

Your very humble servant,

HENRY PERCIVAL."

To describe Lavinia's sensations, while listening to the above, is totally out of my power; an extacy of delight diffused itself through her frame, as she felt convinced that Berresford was really coming home, and that she should indeed see him. Her emotion permitted not articulation; she held out her hand for the letter, and casting a smile of ineffable pleasure upon the surrounding group, she hastily quitted them, and flew to her chamber, to give

vent to the overflowings of gratitude to the Being who had restored to her the happiness she then felt. After continuing for some time in almost a delirium of joy, she reperused Captain Percival's letter, and felt a check to her felicity, when she reflected that Berresford was not able to write himself; but this emotion she endeavoured to banish, desirous of resigning herself to the delightful conviction, that he was indeed returning to her.

She now descended, in order to enquire of her father, in how short a time it was *possible* a cutter could make her passage from the mouth of the Nile to England. The happy friends met her with the warmest congratulations; and Fanny, little less delighted than herself, threw her arms round her sister's neck, while they mutually shed tears of felicity. It is scarcely necessary to say how sincerely the Colonel and Colebrook sympathized in their emotion; the former, indeed, could not banish totally the apprehension, that Berresford's

ford's health must be greatly impaired, before he could be induced to return home on *that* account; but he, with the same temper of mind that characterized Lavinia, resolved not to encourage gloomy ideas.

How changed was now the aspect of even outward objects, to the contemplation of Lavinia! every thing looked pleasing and animated; the sun emitted a brighter ray; the birds sung with increased harmony; the flowers diffused a more delicious odour; in short, she beheld every thing in its most brilliant colours. Her music, which had long been neglected, was now returned to with added relish. Some songs, which she had sent for to town, just before Berresford had left her, and which were his recommendation, she now for the first time attempted; for when they had arrived, she could not bear even to look at them, and had never gained courage to play them over, being aware of how forcibly they would recall to her mind the image of him, whom she

had so often heard sing them. But now that she imagined he would so soon be present to listen to, and accompany her, she practised them over and over, in order that she might execute them with every possible grace ; and as she varied the modulation of her voice, she thought “ Berresford will approve that turn ;” and then, “ how sweetly will his melodious tones join in, in this part !”

Every employment that she pursued, was something relating to Berresford’s return—something that might prove agreeable to him, or which appeared like *preparation* for his arrival. She added several pages to her little journal, couched in the most enthusiastic terms, expressive of her delight at the anticipation of their meeting, displaying the most ardent and animated affection. To Lady Maria, she communicated by letter the happy news, entreating her to repair to Fairfield, that she might be there in readiness to receive and welcome her nephew on his arrival.

In

In a few days she received an answer from her Ladyship, expressing a satisfaction not inferior to her own, at the expected event. She declined coming immediately to Fairfield; but said, that as she supposed Berresford (after staying a short time in Hampshire) would steal a few hours to come to town, to gratify the anxious wishes of his family to see him, she would accompany him back to Fairfield, and remain there till after the consummation of her Edward's happiness.

Lavinia had, been informed by her father, that it was possible the cutter *might* reach England in three weeks after the receipt of Captain Percival's letter; but that it would be nothing uncommon, if it were six. This was enough to satisfy her; she could now look forward to some fixed period, when she might hope to see him *dearest* to her. There was a great degree of comfort in counting the days and hours which might intervene, and thus to beguile the moments of some of their tediousness.

Ever since the arrival of the happy intelligence, Fanny's spirits had been elevated beyond even their original animation; Colebrook completely shared in her joy, and anticipated Berresford's return as the signal for ratifying his felicity.

Day followed day, each seeming longer than the foregoing, from the excessive impatience with which its progress was watched. Three weeks succeeded each other, and Berresford was now daily expected. In vain did Lavinia endeavour to employ herself in any one way long together. Placed exactly opposite the window which commanded a view of the avenue and gate, she would attempt to turn her eyes upon her work or a book; but not for one minute could she fix them on any object but the path which led from the high-road. She frequently wandered towards it, and sometimes walked several miles on the way to Portsmouth, where she imagined it most probable Berresford would land.

land. If by chance she beheld a post-chaise at a distance, her heart would beat as if it would burst its mansion; and though it would gradually sink, as, on a nearer view, she discovered her hopes to be fallacious, it would be long in regaining its tranquillity. Though she knew the cutter would be detained in quarantine for a few days, and concluded she should hear from Berresford before she saw him, yet it was *possible* the letter *might* miscarry, and he himself *might* surprise them.

One day as she was walking, she beheld a gentleman galloping towards her—she thought his air resembled Berresford's—she gasped for breath, and tottered to a bank at the road side, where she seated herself, and awaited, in the utmost perturbation, a confirmation of her doubts—“Oh Heaven!” thought she, “if it *should* be him, he might gallop past me without seeing me—he would never expect to meet me here.”

She feared her agitation would prevent her calling to him. The horseman approached, but checked not the swiftness with which his horse flew *past*—yes, *past*, *past* without even looking at Lavinia!—but it was *not* Berresford. Oh no! had it indeed been him, surely his sympathetic heart would have discovered, *instinctively*, the proximity of its *moitié*.

With slow and lingering steps, the disappointed Lavinia returned to the house; though but a few days had elapsed beyond the very earliest period at which the cutter could have reached England, she began to fear some untoward accident had befallen it; yet the season of the year was propitious. Then again she was alarmed, lest the voyage might have had a contrary effect upon Berresford's health, to what had been expected. But though these ideas occurred to torment her, she never troubled any of her friends by expressing them. She was aware it was a weakness,
incident

incident to a tender and apprehensive affection, and endeavoured to get the better of it.

Another week elapsed—The Colonel having some business to transact at Southampton, proposed riding over the next morning, and returning the day after; he asked Colebrook if he would accompany him, as he was not fond of solitary excursions. Colebrook agreed, and it was settled they should set out early the next morning, which they accordingly did, leaving the sisters to the quiet enjoyment of a *tête-à-tête*.

They past their time very pleasantly, beguiling the hours, by conversing on the subjects most interesting to them both. It was now the middle of June; in the cool of the evening they took a walk, but were particular in leaving word which way they were gone; but no one followed them; and they returned without meeting any adventure, farther than being witness to a rabbit hunt, in which Mr. *Fido* dis-

played himself to great advantage. The sisters having partaken of a light supper, still lingered near the open window, which reached to the ground. The night was beautiful and calm, and their discourse so interesting, that they were averse to retiring. A short pause ensuing, an animated dialogue, of which Berresford had been the subject, Lavinia exclaimed—"I wonder if he still resembles this dear representation?" As she spoke she left the window, and approaching the lights, drew forth Berresford's miniature, and fondly contemplated it.

Fanny followed, and looking at it over her shoulder, said, tenderly—"I dare say he does."

"And if he does not," returned Lavinia, "I shall not love him less—he has a soul which cannot change, and it is that which I adore!"

At this moment they were startled by the sound of a horse's feet, slowly passing the window. They both flew towards it, but

“ Good Heavens !” cried Lavinia, “ it cannot be a stranger—I hope no accident has brought my father home so unexpectedly !”

“Where is Francis?” exclaimed both the sisters at once. “Oh! for God’s sake,” continued Fanny, in the most fearful accent,

accent, "tell me what has happened to him?"

Lavinia dared not interrogate her father; for the dreadful expression of his countenance (in which a pale fixed despair usurped the ruddy glow which was natural to it) struck her dumb. Colonel Fairfield seated himself without speaking.

"Oh!" cried Fanny, in frantic terror, "something dreadful has happened to Francis!"

Colonel Fairfield slowly raised his eyes from the ground, and fixed them on Lavinia, with a look of unutterable anguish, as he pronounced, in a suffocated voice—"Nothing has happened to *Francis—he* is safe and well."

Having articulated these words with difficulty, he stretched out his limbs, and leaning back in his chair, his body writhed, as if enduring great torture, while he prest his teeth over his under lip, which trembled violently. All Fanny's apprehensions
for

for herself were now converted into fears for her sister. The direction of her father's eye at once discovered that Lavinia was the object over whom this horrible storm was hovering.

From the look her father had cast upon her at the moment he entered, Lavinia was prepared to expect a blow, which should fall peculiarly heavy upon herself; of what nature, it was impossible she could conjecture; but however improbable, she instantly apprehended that it must concern her nearest, dearest interest, in the person of Berresford. Yet that Colonel Fairfield should have heard any thing concerning Berresford, was not likely, but it was *possible*. Every horrible anticipation which was floating in her imagination, was confirmed into reality, by the cast of her father's countenance, when addressing himself to her sister; and the subsequent agony convinced Lavinia, more than volumes could have done, of all she had to fear.

She

She sunk upon a seat, and continued silently gazing on her wretched parent; but she demanded not an explanation.

Fanny, in an agony of tears, hung round her father, crying with vehemence — “My dear father, what is the matter? for God’s sake, speak! what has happened? are you ill? let me go and fetch you something.”

The Colonel detained her by grasping her hand, but spake not.

Lavinia (after having regarded her father for some seconds, with the most penetrating glance, under which his eyes fell sorrowfully) covered her face with her hands, and for about five minutes, a dreadful silence reigned, interrupted only by Fanny’s sobs. Lavinia then withdrew her hands from her countenance, in which was now displayed, through a ghastly paleness, a fixed and awfully calm resolution. She rose, and with a firm step approached her father, and taking his hand, she kneeled
down.

down before him, and said, in a low voice, "Speak, my father, I am prepared! I submit to the will of God!"

Her miserable parent gasped for breath, and vainly attempted to articulate. The big tears at length burst their way, and fell upon the upraised pallid face of the meek and patient sufferer, who bent before him. In a hurried manner, Colonel Fairfield now said—"I heard at Southampton, that apprehensions are entertained for the safety of the cutter!"

Lavinia fixed her penetrating eyes upon him, as she pronounced—"My father!"

He turned from her, unable to support her ardent gaze.

Lavinia raised herself from her knees, and stood erect, as she said, in a deep hollow tone—"Berresford is drowned!—I feel it here!" she added, pressing her hands upon her heart, as she slowly returned to the seat she had quitted, and replaced herself, still retaining an appearance of perfect composure.

Colonel Fairfield neither confirmed nor contradicted the assertion Lavinia had uttered ; but, after a few moments, he said, vainly attempting to assume a tone less tinged with despair—" The accounts may perhaps be exaggerated."

Lavinia interrupted him, by exclaiming, emphatically—" My father, you cannot deceive me !"

Colonel Fairfield was silenced ; Fanny's countenance was perfectly horror-struck, while torrents of tears fell from her eyes. An individual, ignorant of their relative situations, would have concluded, on beholding the sisters, that Fanny was the being most affected by this dreadful calamity. She approached her sister, and tremblingly took her hand ; but it was with a fearful embarrassment, as if she dreaded arousing her to a sense of her wretchedness, the *extent* of which, Fanny imagined (from her apparent calmness) she did not yet feel.

Lavinia returned the gentle touch of
her

her fingers, with a warm pressure; and looking at her sorrow-bathed countenance, she said, in a mild accent—"Why do you cry, my dear Fanny? I don't see why *you* should cry."

This unnatural composure in her sister alarmed Fanny beyond every thing, and she cried—"Oh Lavinia, why do you not cry? Oh that I could see you shed a tear!"

The Colonel (who had now recalled that firmness which had never before so totally forsaken him) now drew near Lavinia, and pressing her to his heart, he cried—"My child! my dear, dear Lavinia!"

Lavinia returned his pressure, saying—"Do not agitate yourself thus, my dear father! you have nothing to fear for me."

She still retained an air of perfect tranquillity; and leaning back in her chair, she placed her hands before her.

Her father and sister continued silently hanging

hanging over her, watching every turn of her features, which bore an expression unnatural to them. The only emotion visible was a nervous catching in her limbs, and she twisted her fingers in each other, while her eyes wandered round the room, from one object to another, as if uncertain where to fix. At length she suddenly rose and walked across the room—"Where are you going, my love?" enquired the anxious parent, while both him and Fanny closely followed her steps.

"Only to put my picture by," answered she, as she approached the table where lay the miniature of the unfortunate Major Berresford.

Fanny looked appalled, and by a glance at her father, seemed to say—"Ought we to let her look at it?"

Colonel Fairfield was uncertain how to act; he thought the present torpor of Lavinia's feelings seemed to threaten her intellects, and he conceived any change
would.

would be preferable to an appearance so unnatural; he therefore allowed her to regain the picture

She reached across the table, for the case in which she was accustomed to keep it, and taking up the miniature, placed it in it, without undergoing any visible emotion; before she closed it, she cast her eyes upon the resemblance for a moment, then suddenly withdrew them, and stared round the room; and holding her arm above her eyes, to shade them from the lights, she looked at the different objects in the apartment, as if endeavouring, by recalling where she was, to collect her disordered ideas; then turning to her father, and after to her sister, she smiled vacantly upon each of them, and again bent her eyes upon the picture, which she continued to gaze upon for about a minute, when a slight convulsion agitated her features, which shortly after became completely distorted, when, bursting into a loud convulsive laugh, terminating in an

an hysteric shriek, she staggered back a few paces, and the extended arms of her appalled father, trembling with horror, received her lifeless frame !

CHAP. X.

There ling'ring late and long, conflicting life
Rose against Fate, and still maintain'd the strife !

LUCAN'S PHARSALIA.

A PIERCING shriek from Fanny re-echoed the soul-congealing cry of her sister ; and she was forced to cling to the back of a chair for support. This union of horrible sound, together with the ejaculation which followed from Colonel Fairfield, of " My God, my child is dead !" brought William, who was crossing the hall, precipitately into the parlour. He stood aghast at the scene

scene which presented itself; but soon recollecting himself, he hastened forward to assist his master, whose extreme perturbation rendered him almost incapable of supporting his inanimate burthen, which, with William's assistance, was laid upon a sofa.

Fanny, now in some measure recovering her dismay, flew to the sideboard, and, filling a glass of water, approached Lavinia; but her trembling hands emptied it of half its contents before she could reach her. She sprinkled her face and rubbed her temples, while William summoned Mary, who was always furnished with proper restoratives, in case of emergencies. He then, at his master's commands, dispatched a man on horseback to L——, for the physician, and went himself to request the immediate attendance of the surgeon, who resided in the neighbouring village.

Every restorative which Mary's ingenuity could devise, was applied in vain to
the

the unconscious object ; nor could it be ascertained by her distracted friends, whether the vital spark was not for ever extinguished. No change whatever had taken place when the surgeon arrived ; he instantly advised bleeding, and appeased the agonizing apprehensions of the father and sister, by assuring them that life had not entirely fled ; as the blood flowed, he could plainly discover a feeble fluctuating pulsation round the heart :—

The tides of life resum'd their azure course.

The father raised his grateful eyes to Heaven—grateful, though wretched still. Fanny, shuddering, contemplated the red stream that flowed from her sister's veins, and thought—" Oh, how willingly would I forfeit every drop in my body, could it restore her health and peace !"

While the surgeon was carefully binding up her arm, Lavinia opened her eyes ; they were dull and heavy ; she shortly closed

closed them again without speaking; therefore, whether she had regained her reason or not, could not be discovered.

The surgeon assured them that her pulse was greatly amended, and advised that she should immediately be conveyed to bed, and kept as quiet as possible. He said, as the physician was sent for, he would not himself administer any medicines, but await the arrival of Dr. A——.

Colonel Fairfield himself laid his child upon her bed, and left her sister and her maid to undress her, and returned to the surgeon, and with him awaited impatiently the arrival of Dr. A——.

Lavinia opened her eyes, while her sister was still occupied about her, but she did not speak. Fanny feared to address her, but placed herself on the side of the bed, and watched her countenance.

Lavinia lay on her back, with her eyes open and fixed, without betraying any particular emotion, and thus did the physician find her. He was a friend of the family,

family, and Colonel Fairfield thought it advisable to make known to him, that his daughter's illness was occasioned by her feelings having sustained a violent shock; thus he was enabled to judge more accurately respecting her situation. To his enquiry of "how she found herself?" Lavinia made no answer, nor did she move her eyes from the spot on which they were fixed.

A smothered groan burst from the aching heart of her father; and Fanny sobbed out, "Her reason! Oh Doctor A——, her reason is certainly gone!"

"Don't alarm yourself, my dear young lady," returned the Doctor; then, turning to the Colonel, he continued—"My good friend, you are too much affected; I trust a few days will prove your fears to be groundless. Miss Fairfield has received a violent and most severe shock, and you cannot expect her restoration can be effected in an hour or two."

He then descended, and having written
a pre-

prescription, he gave it to the surgeon, who immediately departed to get it made up ; and the Doctor soon after took his leave, promising to be at Fairfield early in the morning.

In about an hour the surgeon returned himself with the medicine, anxious to know if his patient remained in the same state. He found her precisely as he had left her. Approaching the bed, he said—“ Here is a medicine, Ma'am, which I hope you will take.”

“ Oh, Sir,” cried Fanny, “ she hears you not !”

“ Oh, but she must take the medicine,” returned the surgeon, a good natured, but unpolished man ; “ so, Miss, you had better try to persuade her.”

Fanny bent over her sister, and, in a soft accent, said—“ My dear, dear Lavinia ! here is something that will do you good ; take it, for God's sake !”

She repeated this several times in vain ; she prest her cheek to that of her sister.

Lavinia at length moved her eyes from the spot on which they had so long been fixed, and with her hand gently repelled her sister, as if oppressed by her leaning over her.

Fanny thought she had gained a great point, in arousing her in any way, and repeated her solicitations with added energy. Lavinia looked at her for a moment, then slowly raising herself on her arm, she held out her hand for the medicine, and swallowed it instantly, and again dropped upon her pillow, and resumed her former position, in which she continued for many hours, her eyes still open, while her sister retained her situation beside her; and her father, in an adjoining dressing-room, past the wretched moments in listening to every movement which occurred within the chamber.

CHAP. XI.

Cold the soft hand, that sooth'd woe's weary head,
And quench'd the eye, the pitying tear that shed?
And mute the voice, whose pleasing accents stole,
Infusing balm, into the rankl'd soul!
Oh Death! why arm with cruelty thy power,
And spare the idle weed, yet lop the flower?
Why fly thy shafts, in lawless error driven?
Is virtue then no more the care of Heaven?
But, peace! hold, thought!—be still, my bursting heart!

BEATTIE.

I WILL now acquaint the reader with the source and nature of the intelligence Colonel Fairfield had learnt, concerning the cutter on board of which Major Berresford had embarked.

When the Colonel and Mr. Colebrook
I 2 reached

reached Southampton, they separated for a short time ; the former to transact the business which had brought him there, and the latter to visit some friends that resided in that town. Colonel Fairfield had occasion, in the course of his walk, to repair to one of the quays. As he was standing near the edge, contemplating the shipping, his attention was suddenly arrested by a heavy sigh, almost amounting to a groan ; he turned to discover from whom it proceeded, when he perceived, almost close to him, a man seated on the ground, his elbows rested on his knees, while his hands supported his chin ; his eyes were fixed on the water, and his whole appearance was sorrowful in the extreme. The Colonel thought his features were familiar to him, but could not recollect where he had seen them. He looked at him for some minutes, and at length, with painful surprise, he discovered that this man either *was*, or greatly resembled the servant who had always attended Major Berresford in his visits

visits at Fairfield. The Colonel approached him, with a fearful presentiment of something disagreeable, and addressed him, by saying—"I have certainly seen your face before, friend."

The man started at the sound of his voice, and instantly jumped up, and taking off his hat, held it in his hand, while he silently looked at the Colonel.

"Is it possible I see Simmons, Major Berresford's servant?" cried the Colonel.

The man cast his eyes to the ground, and answered, "Yes, Sir, I am Simmons; but——" he suddenly stopped, and hastily averted his face.

"Where did you leave your master?" cried the Colonel, eagerly; "is he landed? or is he still on board ship? Where is he?—speak, for God's sake!" continued the Colonel, alarmed at the man's dejected countenance.

Simmons made no reply, but pointed towards the sea, and then looked up to Heaven!

“What do you mean?” cried the Colonel, with encreased terror; “is he not disembarked?”

The man shook his head, as he pronounced, mournfully—“He will never land again!” then, quickly turning away his head, he burst into tears.

Colonel Fairfield gazed at him with horror, yet dared not ask a further explanation. The man observed his emotion, and continued, in a broken voice—“I knew very well how you would all be grieved, and that was the reason that I did not come to Fairfield to tell you—I have been here three days, but could not gain courage to set out.”

The colour forsook Colonel Fairfield's cheek, and turning round, he bid Simmons follow him. They entered the nearest public-house, and the Colonel enquired if he could have a room to himself for some time? Being answered in the affirmative, he entered, followed by Simmons, and
having

Having fastened the door, he said—"Now, Simmons, explain your dreadful words!"

"Dreadful, indeed, Sir!—the cutter foundered, and my dear, dear master, was the *only* soul who perished!"

The Colonel stood the speechless image of despair; and for near ten minutes, both remained silent, when, in a choaked and under tone, Colonel Fairfield said—"The particulars!"

"We set sail from Egypt the thirty-first of March, Sir; and for two months from that time, our voyage was as comfortable as could be; the weather so fine, and my dear master getting better every day. There was but one thing to complain of, and that did not much signify, while the weather kept good, and that was, that the master of the vessel was always drunk; and the lieutenant that commanded was so poorly in health, that he was hardly ever out of the cabin—indeed, we all thought he would have died several times. In short, every thing was managed

by a parcel of boys ; and if it had not been for my dear master, I am sure we never should have got so far in safety. We put into Gibraltar, and were detained there for three days, while the vessel was repairing ; and then it was we found out that she was making her last voyage, for her bottom was quite rotten, and they had depended upon the favourable time of year for getting her home safe.

“ Well, Sir, she was patched up, and we set sail from Gibraltar on the eighth of June. Every day, as we got nearer England, master seemed to grow more and more impatient ; and so *worrited* himself with fidgeting about the thoughts of seeing you all, that he got quite ill again : and one day, when we thought we had got within a couple of days sail of Spithead, master came on deck, and he said to the fellow at the helm (who was as drunk as an owl all the time), ‘ I think,’ says he, in that sweet and mild way, as he always used to speak, ‘ I think, my good friend,

we

we have mistaken our course; for I cannot discover any appearance of our being so near the end of our voyage—on the contrary, I perceive land in the opposite direction to where it ought to rise.’

“ The master looked very sulky, and said, he had not been pilot for so many years, without knowing what he was about. So my dear master did not say another word to him, but went down to the lieutenant, who commanded. He found him in his cot, very ill; so he told him he was afraid the master was drunk, and not to be trusted. The lieutenant answered peevishly, that he thought him perfectly trust-worthy, and did not question his capacity as pilot.—I believe the truth was, he was so bad himself, that he did not care what became of him..

“ Well, my dear master could say no more—he went to bed very poorly. In the middle of the night, we were all roused up by a violent shock; and before I could scramble on deck, I heard the water gurgling.

gling. I thought directly of my dear master ; but I had no need to call him, for I heard his voice from above, crying out, ' put out the long-boat instantly !'

" On going up, I found the vessel had struck upon a rock, which had damaged her bottom so completely, that the water was passing in. It was a calm night, so we thought we should all easily be saved in the long-boat.

" All the crew were on deck, except the lieutenant ; when my dear master perceived that he was not there, he went down to his cabin, which the water was fast entering ; he found him in bed, and he seemed resolved not to stir ; but master dragged him out, and brought him up upon his back—and, God knows, he was but little able to do it. Well, we got him into the boat, and all the rest followed as fast as they could scramble in. There was a poor woman, whose husband was killed in Egypt, on board with her infant ; master had persuaded the lieutenant to give her a passage

sage home from Malta, where he met her one day when he went on shore; she began begging of him; his tender heart pitied her, and so he got her a passage home. Well, when we had got this poor woman into the boat, and her child in her arms, my dear master followed last of all. Though it was a dark night for the time of year, master said he was sure he could see land to the left, which must be the French coast; so he thought we had better take an opposite course; for if we landed, we should be sure to be made prisoners, and perhaps detained for a long time; but that when daylight came, we might chance to meet with an English vessel, which could take us on board. Nothing but the want of provisions alarmed us; but for that we might have attempted to reach England in the boat, which, I dare say, we could have done with safety."

"Well, well, my good fellow," interrupted Colonel Fairfield, "your master?"

"Yes, Sir," continued Simmons, "my
16 poor,

poor, dear master, was himself steering the boat, when the wretched woman (getting a drive, by accident, from one of the sailors) let her child drop out of her arms into the sea!—Hardly had the child dropt, when I heard another plunge, and I saw my dear master swimming after it. The tide was very strong, and bore it away to a distance. We soon lost sight of both; for it was too dark for us to know where they were. Full ten minutes elapsed, and we all thought they were both drowned, when, all at once, I heard the water rushing about, and looking over the side, I saw the child! Oh Lord, Sir! my master, my dear master, was holding it up in his hand! a sailor caught at the child, and, at the same moment, a rope was thrown over to assist master, but to no purpose—the instant he let go the child, he sunk!—I saw him sink myself—he never rose again!”

Here Simmons ceased, wholly overcome by his emotion. A long pause ensued; the poor fellow then continued—“I would
have

have followed him, but they held me—yes, Sir, they tied me down! After rowing about the spot for near an hour, they said it was no use to remain any longer. I roared, Sir! I roared aloud, when they talked of leaving him! but they did not mind me, but set the sails. Oh, Sir, when the monsters steered the boat away, and left him behind!—I never, never shall forget——”

“Stop!” cried the Colonel, “I have heard enough!”

“There is little more to say, Sir; we were picked up the next day, and landed here three days ago.”

I will not particularize the scene which followed, when Colonel Fairfield met Colebrook, nor their sensations in their ride home. Those of the Colonel can be compared to nothing, but the feelings of some being who is obliged, by some irresistible power, to plunge a poniard into the heart of the object most dear to him on earth!

At

At the park gate, Colebrook quitted him in silence, and returned to the Hall. The same night Simmons proceeded in the mail-coach to London, the unfortunate messenger of incurable anguish to the hearts of those who held Major Berresford's existence ten thousand times dearer than their own !

CHAP. XII.

He sleeps in dust, and all the Muses mourn !
He whom each virtue fir'd with grace divine ;
Friend, teacher, patron, darling of mankind !
He sleeps in dust ! Ah ! how shall I pursue
My theme ? to heart-consuming grief resign'd.

BRATTIE.

At an early hour in the morning, Dr. A—— made his appearance at Fairfield. He was much disappointed to find that the medicine for promoting sleep, which had been administered, had failed of its usual effect.

Fanny declared she was certain her sister had not closed her eyes during the night ; but now, instead of being fixed, they began

gan to wander, from which the physician inferred, that her reason was in some degree affected, though not violently. He ordered the dose to be doubled. Fanny presented it to her sister, who took it as before.

The physician being gone, she resumed her place by the bedside, deaf to the entreaties of her father, to seek a short repose ; she would not hear of it, declaring it was impossible she could obtain a moment's slumber, until her sister's eyes were closed in sleep.

The anxious parent seated himself beside her, while, from both their hearts, burst

————— The sigh of love,

Breath'd from the inmost soul ; pure friendship's prayer, .

Which fain with life would buy the life she craves ; .

Affection's tender prompt solicitude, .

Keen to explore, and eager to relieve .

The wants just hinted by the asking glance.

WRANGHAM.

How

How frequently did the affectionate girl bend forward, to ascertain whether her sister had closed her eyes; and what a damp fell upon her heart, when she met the extended orbs gazing upon her! The mere want of rest, independent of every other consideration, was sufficient to occasion indisposition.

Towards evening, Fanny thought, as her ear caught the gentle breathing of her sister, that it seemed more regular, and leaning forward, she perceived Lavinia's eyes were closed—she raised her hands to Heaven, and whispered an ejaculation of thanks.

Several times during the day, messengers had been sent from the Hall and the Parsonage, to enquire for the family. Miss Colebrook herself walked over, and sent up a pressing entreaty, that she might be allowed to share in Fanny's fatigues. A grateful and affectionate denial was returned.—Dr. A——— did not see Lavinia when he called in the evening, as she
still

still slept—he left his directions with the Colonel.

Fanny was most anxious to hear every particular of the late dreadful catastrophe, persuading herself she should be able to find room for hope, when all the circumstances should be explained ; but she had as yet no opportunity of enquiring of her father. At night Colonel Fairfield again took his post in the dressing-room, while Fanny, and the *femme de chambre* (Mary), attended within the chamber. How melancholy were the cogitations of the unhappy father ! they cannot be more elegantly expressed, than in the words of the admired Wrangham* :—

The future, once so bright,
When Hope and Fancy sketch'd the happy group,
Dear to a grandsire's breast, appals him now
With horror's direst forms ! the shrouded corse,
The bier, the black procession ! scar'd he shrinks,
And back thro' many a well-remember'd year
Darts his quick eye ! But, oh ! yet deeper pangs

Lie.

* MR. WRANGHAM on the Raising of JAIRUS'S Daughter.

Lie ambush'd there! Too faithful to the past,
Officious memory throngs the busy scene
With all the father's joys—the fond caress,
The heart-sprung smile, the glance intelligent,
The speaking gesture, and the courted knee,
Throne of the babe's delight! In dumb despair,
Dumbness, to which all eloquence is mute,
He hides his countenance!

About three o'clock Lavinia awoke; Mary had just quitted the room for a few minutes. When Fanny perceived she was awake, she leant over her, and entreated she would take some nourishment (which was prepared by the fire below). Lavinia did not immediately answer; and Fanny, with encreased earnestness, said—" Shall I ring the bell for Mary to bring it?"

Lavinia looked at her, and suddenly sitting up in the bed, she repeated—" Bell!" then, after a pause, she sighed heavily, and murmured, in a plaintive voice—" No bell hath tolled for him!—hark! the

" Sea-mew screams his knell!"

Fanny

Fanny could not bear this; her tears streamed in torrents, and she called to her father to come to her:

He entered with precipitation, and enquired what was the matter?

Lavinia continued in the same tone,

“The great waters roll over his soul—

His grave is a cave in the ocean!”

Fanny threw herself upon her father's neck, and sobbed aloud, crying out—“She looks so dreadful! Oh, I wish I was dead! 'Tis too much—I cannot bear it!”

Her father pressed her close to his breast, and mingled his tears with her's.

Lavinia turned her eyes upon them; the affliction she witnessed recalled her wandering ideas, bewildered by the opium she had taken, and she said, in a beseeching tone—“Do not mind me, I am very foolish—I know not what I say. Oh what a wretch I am, to make you all so miserable! Fanny, my dear Fanny, I will take some food, if you wish it.”

Inex-

Inexpressibly relieved, by this certain evidence of restored rationality, Fanny flew, with a lightened heart, to procure what she wanted ; and when Lavinia again fell asleep, she was induced to seek repose on a sofa in the same room.

CHAP. XIII.

His head to earth the sufferer bow'd, with hands
Prest on his bosom ; yet his eyes uprais'd
In hope to Heaven !—" Father of all," he cried,
" Thy will be done ! All was thy gift ; thine own
Thou hast resum'd ! Blest be the hand that gave ;
And—— peace, my heart !—blest when it takes
Away !"

GISBORNE.

THREE days passed, unmarked by any event, while Lavinia's bodily health gradually amended. She never spoke ; but when address-

addressed, she refused not to answer. She had never been seen to shed a tear; deep and revolving sighs were the only indications of sorrow she betrayed. On the fourth day, she beckoned Fanny to her, and whispered in her ear—"Tell my father to relate every particular—I can bear it now."

Fanny obeyed, and her father drew near, and seated himself by the bedside. Lavinia threw her handkerchief over her face. In a concise manner, Colonel Fairfield related the circumstances told him by Simmons; when he had concluded, Lavinia said—"Now, leave me alone for a few hours; 'tis all that I require."

She was obeyed. In about three hours her bell rang, and Fanny flew to her apartment. She said she would get up, which she did, and remained for some time, retaining perfect calmness:

Her mind, unbroken, keeps its constant frame,

In greatness, or misfortune, still the same!

Ync

The next morning Lavinia declared it her intention to go into the drawing-room, which was on the same floor with her chamber; and she desired her sister would no longer refuse admission to Francis Colebrook; though she found it impossible (as yet) to receive any other of the friends who were constantly sending, or calling to enquire after her.

Sir Francis Colebrook had made many ineffectual efforts to be admitted to the presence of his old friend, hoping to alleviate his sufferings, by offering the balm of sympathizing friendship. The day Lavinia quitted her chamber, Colonel Fairfield received Sir Francis in his study.

Both were silent for many minutes after they met; the Colonel, nearly overcome by the reflection of the sad reverse in his sensations, to what they had been when last he beheld his friend—and Sir Francis was, in truth, struck dumb, by the melancholy and rapid alteration in the Colonel's
looks!

looks! The natural expression of his countenance was lively, and Sir Francis had never before seen him without a good colour, which was habitual to him. His features now wore an aspect of the deepest dejection, tempered only by a pallid cast of resignation. It was, as Sterne pathetically describes it—"One of those heads which Guido has often painted—mild, pale, penetrating; free from all common-place ideas of fat contented ignorance, looking downwards upon the earth, it looked forwards—but looked as if it looked at something beyond this world!"

On the day succeeding that on which all the animated anticipations of future felicity, entertained by the Fairfield family, had received its death-blow, Fanny had dispatched a servant to Colebrook Hall with poor Fido, who she found it impossible to keep out of her sister's room, and she dreaded the effect which the sight of him might have upon her. She sent a

strict charge to Colebrook to keep him tied up, and on no account to allow him to come back for some time.

When she found that her sister was resolved on quitting her chamber, she carefully removed every object which she conceived calculated to recall to her mind the anguish of her loss.

As kindred objects, kindred thoughts excite,
These with magnetic virtue soon unite.

The drawing-room was favourable to sparing Lavinia's feelings; for from its being up stairs (and consequently not so agreeable in the country), they had scarcely ever occupied it when Major Berresford had been at Fairfield; it therefore could not recall scenes which, had she entered either of the other sitting-rooms, must instantly have recurred to her mind. Lavinia lay reclined on a sofa in this apartment, without betraying any violent indication of turbulent anguish:

Nor groan'd her breast, nor fill'd her eyes with tears,
But still the same majestic form she wears;
An awful grief sat decent in her face,
Such as became her loss.

The affectionate father and sister sat anxiously watching her countenance, but it underwent no extraordinary change, during three hours that she remained in the drawing-room, when she withdrew to her chamber, and lay on the bed for the rest of the day, great part of which her face was concealed in the bed-clothes, and none but the all-seeing eye of God knew what passed in her heart.

From this day her health gradually improved, and she spent most of her time in the company of her father, sister, and young Colebrook. She never, in their presence, betrayed any violent or uncontrollable despair, but always (before witnesses) supported an appearance of composure. Whenever she felt her sensations raised to that pitch of agony, as to
over-

overrule all her power to repel them, she would retire to her chamber, and there, by every effort of piety and reason, endeavour to subdue her anguish. Often would she think—"How absurd! how unreasonable was it in me to imagine it possible I should ever be permitted to enjoy such extreme felicity, as a union with one of the first of human beings would have ensured! No, to have been the wife of my Edward! to have called him mine! to have past every hour in his presence! is more than any mortal dare aspire to! I was presumptuous to imagine that I should be permitted such exquisite delight! No, no! it is not in this world that we can experience such perfect bliss—it would have intoxicated my soul—I should have forgot myself—such a delirium of joy would have made me unmindful of *why* I was placed here—I should have had nothing to wish for—in such an heaven on earth, I should have ceased to reflect upon the Heaven of hereafter! The Almighty, in his great

wisdom, has regarded my eternal peace, and kindly denied me the possession of an object, which would have attached me too strongly to this sublunary state ! Oh, my Edward, thou art now at home !—thy exalted spirit was unfit to mingle with the inferior beings of this sphere, and now, in the mansions of blessedness, it seeks (where only it could be found) a nature equal to its own !”

While pursuing these reflections, Lavinia experienced a degree of consolation—who ever sought for comfort in *religion* that did not find it ?

Religion's all ! Descending from the skies
To wretched man, the Goddess in her left
Holds out this world, and in her right the next ;
She gives the soul a soul that acts a god !
Religion ! Providence ! an after state !
This is firm footing ; here is solid rock ;
This can support us ; all is sea beside,
Sinks under us ; be storms and then devours ;
His hand the good man fastens on the skies,
And bias earth roll, nor feels her idle whirl !

YOUNG.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

My tortur'd bosom, sad remembrance spare !
Why dost thou plant thy keenest daggers there,
And shew me what I was, and aggravate despair ?

THOMAS.

THUS did the refined understanding of the unfortunate Lavinia endeavour to reconcile herself to her severe (dreadfully severe) destiny. She forced herself, as much as possible, to continue in the company of her father and sister, and avoided solitude, whenever she could retain her composure. Fanny constantly slept with her; indeed Lavinia would have solicited her to do so, had she not offered, for her pre-

sence was a check upon the indulgence of her misery, which, spite of every effort of philosophy, would (when she was unobserved) burst forth, as some tender recollection occurred; but she ever studiously endeavoured to banish the remembrance of what *had* been. As if to contradict the idea she wished to encourage (of perfect happiness being incompatible with human nature), the days which she had past in Major Berresford's society would present themselves to her mind. The despair, the excruciating anguish, which ever attended the recollection of scenes, in which he had been the principal, was so overwhelming, that Lavinia felt as if she could have flown to the uttermost part of the earth, to escape the thought. She had enquired of Fanny if the picture was safe, but told her not to give it her for some time. She did not ask for her dog, justly imagining *why* it was not allowed to appear. She never spoke on the subject of her woes, nor did any of the family, or allude to it in any way;

way; they were all conscious that time only could restore tranquillity; as to happiness, they (as is ever the case while under the first impression of a heavy calamity) felt at this time as if it could never return.

I shall but slightly touch on the effect produced by the early and lamentable fate of Major Berresford, upon his afflicted relatives. Lady Maria Courtney left London the day after she heard of it, followed by Simmons (whom she resolved always to retain in her service) and her own maid, in a hired chaise, while she preceded them in her post chariot, with all the blinds up. She travelled post night and day, till she reached North Wales, where she had an estate, and elegant residence. There she took up her abode, and resolved never more to quit it; nor would she admit any one into her presence, but Simmons and her *femme de chambre*. Lady Maria Courtney, in losing Edward Berresford, lost every thing for which she wished

to live ; and in him she mourned the annihilation of all her earthly happiness.

The Honourable Mr. Berresford (the unhappy father) was totally inconsolable ; nor could the united efforts of an affectionate wife and son (who thoroughly participated in his wretchedness) prevail upon him to be resigned. He had lost his darling favourite, and, compared to him, his other sons, though deserving in themselves, lost the power of pleasing.

CHAP. XV.

Lo! here the fortitude compar'd,
That truth and error gave ;
'Twas but to die the Roman dar'd,
The Christian dares to live !

GISBORNE.

NEVER did Colonel Fairfield and his daughters appear so interesting as at the present awful crisis ; each, by every effort in their power, striving to alleviate their reciprocal misery. Never was Lavinia's exalted character more strikingly displayed, than, while smothering her acute anguish, she forced herself to appear calm, to spare the feelings of those whose anxious eyes were constantly watching her.

x 5

Often

Often did she catch the heavy sigh, which
burst from her father's heart :

“ And when he sigh'd, sigh'd deeper ; yet in haste
The sound restrain'd, lest she should mark it.”

And never did Fanny appear so enchant-
ing in the eyes of her lover, as when shed-
ding

“ The graceful tear that streams for others' woes !”

No, not even in the most animated mo-
ments of vivacity, did she seem half so
charming ! Thus were the bonds of af-
fection, which linked the hearts of these
amiable people, secured and strengthened,
by the heavy calamity that had befallen
them.

“ Sure from the fellowship of suffering virtue,
Sweet peace and concord spring.”

The only employment Lavinia could (as
yet) pursue, was reading ; almost all her
time was occupied in perusing works on
the

the immortality of the soul; "Young's Night Thoughts" was her most favourite study. While absorbed in the grand contemplation of eternity, she felt as if she was approaching her Edward! and she would often think—"Can there be a stronger stimulus for acting right, than the hope of one day being permitted to rejoin him?" This idea was frequently followed by a long train of similar reflections, of which I will present the reader with a slight sketch.

Is it not the first wish of the human heart, to be found worthy to be admitted to everlasting bliss, in company with the hosts of Heaven? Yet, surely, we must be sensible, that the Almighty would never be capable of injustice, and, without injustice, we could never be allowed to class with those to whom we are so very inferior. Can there be a greater incentive to right than this idea? Human nature loves not to confess itself unworthy; and what can be more humiliating, than

to conceive ourselves *incapable* of following the bright example of those who are now enjoying the reward of righteousness. We must resolutely determine to pursue their steps, or at once confess ourselves inadequate to the practice of virtue, and an adherence to right reason, and relinquish all hopes of ever being admitted among them. Thus must we consent to give up every long-cherished hope, of being reunited to those, to whose loss we can alone reconcile ourselves, by the persuasion that the separation is but temporary. We must *decline* this only means of consolation, when we acknowledge and demonstrate, by our actions, that we are incapable of imitating those virtues and excellencies, which so fondly endeared them to us. For we cannot, with any shadow of reason, imagine we shall be allowed to partake of the felicity they enjoyed, when we are so far beneath them in our deserts. There can be no better method of bringing this conviction home to the heart, than by a slight

slight retrospection of our feelings, when, in the common intercourse of sublunary societies, we have found that we were not considered of sufficient estimation, to be admitted into some particular or select circles, where talents, accomplishments, or a greater degree of consequence than we may be entitled to, is necessary to qualify us admissable.

A persuasion of this nature is ever attended by mortification, and a secret desire (though the heart will not always confess this, even to itself), that we were possessed of the requisites to place us on a footing with those we envy.—The human mind cannot brook the thought of inferiority; it hates to acknowledge its incapacity of rising to an equal height with the most exalted; and if it cannot do this, it too frequently descends to depreciating the virtue it cannot equal. This sensation doubtless owes its origin to pride; yet by a little judicious correction, this very pride
(which,

(which, in itself, is one of the meanest sentiments that sullies our nature) may be converted into the most animated stimulus to right; it will fix in our souls a determination to persevere in the pursuit of those qualities which can alone ensure our happiness here, or constitute us meet associates for those we fondly hope to join hereafter; it will work in us a firm resolution to cultivate those perfections, the attainment of which would exalt us above all mundane considerations, and permit us to hope (almost to a certainty) that we shall rejoin those, whose presence here constituted our chief earthly happiness, and by whose loss we are more than reconciled to quitting a scene which, when deprived of them, appears a dreary waste:

Our dying friends come o'er us like a cloud;
To damp our brainless ardours, and abate
That glare of light, which often blinds the wise.
Our dying friends are pioneers, to smooth
Our rugged pass to death; to break those bars

Of horror, and abhorrence, Nature throws
Cross our obstructed way, and thus to make
Welcome, as safe, our port from every storm.

YOUNG.

One melancholy night, when Colonel Fairfield was unable to sleep, and all his keenest feelings had been awakened, by reading a long detail in the newspaper, of the loss of the cutter, and piteous fate of Major Berresford (whose eulogium was penned in the most enthusiastic terms), he wrote the following lines to the Spirit of his regretted friend !

Blown to the regions of eternal day,
Escap'd the dreary scene where still I dwell,
Impart, blest spirit! one celestial ray,
The sad sensations of my soul to quell!

Thy presence, earth to Heaven could transform !
Mistrust and care all vanish'd at thy sight ;
Thy eloquence the firmest could disarm,
And make e'en Wisdom's self confess thee right.

Alas !

Alas ! thy presence was too great a bliss,
 For thoughtless erring man to be permitted ;
 And Heaven call'd thee from a world like this,
 To one for which alone thy soul was fitted.

A few days after, the following lines appeared in the daily paper, offered as a tribute to the memory of Major Berresford ; they were the production of one who had never been personally acquainted with him, but who, knowing his public and private character, justly estimated his transcendent virtues.

LINES

ON THE

DEATH OF MAJOR BERRESFORD.

Magnis tamen excidit ausis !

Lamented youth ! thy fate but too severe,
 Demands the ready tribute of a tear ;
 The freshest laurels should adorn thy grave,
 None e'er was greater, or more truly brave.

Not

Not e'en thy valour in thy country's cause,
(To guard her King, and to support her laws !
Vent'ring thy life, thy fortunes, and thy all,
To answer to stern honour's rigid call)
Could like *this* act immortalize thy fame,
Where all was risk'd, without the chance of gain ;
Except that pleasure, which a noble mind,
In doing good, can never fail to find.
With pain, Compassion views thy kindred dear !
But sudden triumph checks the falling tear.
" Who can regret a death like his," she cried,
" When they reflect the cause in which he died ?"
Thy friends, exulting, shall a tomb erect,
With mournful cypress, and with laurels deck'd ;
And on it be these sacred words inscrib'd—
" 'Twas in Humanity's great cause he died !"
Volumes could not say more, nor more inspire
The virtuous bosom, with a warm desire
To imitate such excellence in man !
" Do so, ye few ! Oh do so, ye that can !"

CHAP. XVI.

The sea is like a silvery lake,
And o'er its calm the vessel glides
Gently, as if it fear'd to wake
The slumbers of the sleeping tides !

THOMAS MOORE.

Thus passed one wretched, melancholy month, during which the Colebrooks, and Mr. Williams, had been admitted at Fairfield ; to all other visitors they were alike denied. A deep and settled melancholy was manifest in the appearance of the whole family. Fanny would frequently burst into tears, as she gazed on her sister's placid, though woe-worn countenance ; and she felt a degree of satisfaction.

tion, when Lavinia also shed drops of sorrow, for she thought it would lighten the weight from her heart.

Colonel Fairfield beheld, with feelings indescribable, the patient sufferings of his idolized child, struggling to bear with fortitude the dreadful blow that had blasted all her sanguine hopes of earthly felicity; and, in the very May-day of existence, converted all the animated anticipations of youth into horror and despondency! If he could induce her to quit Fairfield for awhile, he thought it might prove beneficial, by changing, in some measure, the current of her thoughts. It was far from his wish to transport her to any place of gaiety; in her present state of mind, it would have been inhuman, to have asked her to mix in society; nor could any of the family have supported the presence of indifferent people. But the Colonel conceived, that, though the situation he might fix upon might be equally, or even more, retired than Fairfield,

field, any place would be more eligible at the present crisis, than continuing in the scenes which had witnessed their deepest distress.

They had been in the habit of making excursions to the Isle of Wight; the southern coast, commonly called the back of the island, was completely retired, and beautifully picturesque, and a spot might there be found, perfectly in unison with the state of their feelings. Colonel Fairfield accordingly proposed to his daughters, that he should send William over, to procure a cottage, or lodging, at or near Shanklin, where it was his wish they should continue for some weeks.

Lavinia, at first, felt averse to leaving home; but instantly recalling the folly of persisting in remaining in a place which only tended to nurse her misery, she offered no objection to her father's proposal. Fanny felt a degree of satisfaction, at the idea of any change; and Colebrook declared he would accompany them.

The

The next day William set out for the Isle of Wight; and two days after the Colonel received a letter from him, informing him, that he had procured a cottage (within a quarter of a mile of Shanklin Chine), suitable for the accommodation of part of the family, and some rooms in an adjoining house, which would receive the servants, if necessary.

This was all that was required; and the next day but one, Colonel Fairfield and his daughters, accompanied by young Colebrook, and followed by Mary, and another female servant, in a hired chaise, left Fairfield, and embarked at Lymington for the Isle of Wight.

A mind of sensibility will easily imagine Lavinia's feelings, on quitting Fairfield, and in traversing a road, and passing through a town, where she had so often been accompanied by her lamented Berresford. These are sensations which cannot be described; pity it is that they must be experienced by every tender and refined

heart! It does, indeed, require those exquisite emotions of delight, which such natures are capable of enjoying, to recompence them for the pain which must often inevitably accompany their susceptibility.

In little less than an hour, the party landed at Yarmouth, and immediately set out for Newport, where they dined, and reached Shanklin in the evening, where they found every thing prepared, comfortably, by William, for their reception.

When a few days had accommodated them to their new abode, each individual of the party felt more comfortable than when at Fairfield. The father and daughters had always been wont to recall the idea of their *home* with delight, and anticipate the thoughts of revisiting its loved scenes—scenes which ever revived in their minds the remembrance of happy, happy days, which they had passed in them. But now they thought of it with a desponding horror, engendered by reflecting

flecting on the sufferings they had lately endured under its roof. It is ever thus; the value we set upon all local objects entirely depends upon the feelings we have experienced while contemplating them. How frequently will a flower, a tune, a particular word, or expression, cause a thrill of pleasure, from recalling the recollection of past happiness, which we fondly hope we may at some period again enjoy! But if, from peculiar circumstances, we are confident such scenes can never recur, what a chilling, dreary sensation does it produce! Oh, it is cruel! we must be wretched, until we have succeeded in banishing the reflection.

Lavinia's time was occupied in reading, and wandering along the sea shore; the ocean was the grave of her beloved! and while contemplating it, she seemed as if visiting his tomb—but she never went alone—no, she flew from herself, and her father always accompanied her. His pious and rational conversation repelled the
force

force of her sorrow. Fanny and Colebrook also frequently joined them; but Lavinia always endeavoured to persuade them to extend their walks, for she wished them, if possible, to dissipate the gloom, which constantly being in the society of the afflicted naturally generates.

How trifling a circumstance affects the human mind! One morning that Fanny and Colebrook had gone to take a long walk, the Colonel was hurrying over the newspaper, in order to accompany Lavinia to the shore; he looked first at the promotions (as all old soldiers do); and notwithstanding his conviction of Major Berresford's death, he felt a chilling coldness creep through his veins, as he read—
“——— regiment, Captain Henry Percival to be major—vice Edward Courtney Berresford, deceased.” Colonel Fairfield threw down the paper, and, after pacing the room two or three times, he said to Lavinia—“I am ready to accompany you, my love.”

Lavinia

Lavinia was startled by her father's precipitate manner, and tenderly enquired, if he had seen any thing unpleasant in the paper?

"No, nothing—nothing, my love," interrupted the Colonel; and presenting his arm, they strolled, sad and silent, down the Chine, and seated themselves on the shore. The Colonel was wholly unable to rally his spirits, or banish the reflections, which the sight of a name so tenderly beloved had awakened; while Lavinia was thinking how different, a few weeks since, would have been her sensations, on beholding the emotion with which her father had thrown down the paper; "but, alas!" thought she, "I have *now* nothing to fear; all my hopes, all my wishes, are buried in the dread abyss I am now contemplating!"

The tears trickled slowly down her cheeks: her father observed her emotion, and pressing her hand to his breast, he exclaimed—"My Lavinia! pride of my

heart!" then clasping his hands together, he continued, "Oh Heavenly Father! who hast doomed me to the anguish of beholding the destruction of her peace, her every hope of happiness annihilated, teach me to bear with resignation this heavy, heavy stroke!"

Lavinia pulled her bonnet still farther over her face, and said, in a faint voice—"Time, my father! time, under Heaven, I trust, will restore my peace!—happiness I do not look for *here*."

"Oh," returned he, as he fixed his eyes upon the white sails of a fishing-boat, "how enviable do I consider the fate of that poor fisherman, though doomed to labour for his daily bread! How gladly would I forfeit every worldly good, and gain my subsistence by the sweat of my brow, could I but restore that peace to your heart it once enjoyed!"

Lavinia sighed heavily.—Their attention was now, in some measure, diverted by the landing of the fishing-boat, or rather
the

The pleasure-boat (as, on a nearer view, it appeared to be, from the style in which it was painted). A sailor jumped on shore, and was followed by a man, whose height seemed almost gigantic; he wore a great-coat, which reached to his heels; and his head was covered with a red worsted night-cap, drawn close down to his eyes; his face was pale and interesting, and as he proceeded up the shore, he moved with languor, as if indisposed—yet he moved like a gentleman. As Colonel Fairfield followed him with his eyes, he said—“That poor man looks ill; he is dressed like a Frenchman—perhaps he is some unfortunate emigrant, who has escaped from the opposite coast; if so, I may be of service to him—wait here, my love, and I will follow and accost him.”

With that noble spirit of genuine hospitality, which ever considers the name of stranger as a recommendation, and with that Christian-like propensity, never to let an opportunity escape, of being service-

able to a fellow-creature, Colonel Fairfield addressed the stranger, saying—"I hope you will excuse this intrusion, Sir; but as your appearance bespeaks you a foreigner, I may perhaps have it in my power to be of use to you."

The Colonel paused; the stranger had stopped, and turned, the moment he addressed him; and now, instead of giving a rational answer to his polite offer, he stared at him, with an expression of countenance, so perfectly indefinable, as at once to convince Colonel Fairfield he had accosted an unfortunate being, whose intellects were totally deranged. He repeated his offer in French, but to no purpose; the maniac (for the Colonel could not hesitate to pronounce him such) still continued to stare at him, with the same unintelligible gaze. The Colonel was about to enquire (of the sailor who attended him) whether his conclusions were just, when he was confirmed in his opinion, by the stranger's suddenly rushing past him, when,

When, tearing the red night-cap off his head, he tossed it to a distance, and flew like lightning towards the spot where Lavinia stood !

Alarmed beyond all power of description, Colonel Fairfield hastened after him ; but so great was the velocity of the stranger's movements, that he was unable to overtake him before he had reached Lavinia, who, when he was within a few paces of her, gave a piercing shriek of terrified horror, and fell lifeless on the sand !

With equal violence did the stranger throw himself beside her, and clasped her to his heart, regardless of the voice of the distracted father, who called to him, in an agony, exclaiming—" Wretch, let go my child ! you have frightened her to death !" As he uttered these words, he sprang forward, with extended arms, to rescue his darling from her perilous situation—when suddenly his limbs refused their

office, his nerves relaxed, and his arms fell motionless by his side—an irresistible power seemed to chain him to the spot, and, with his eyes projecting beyond their natural limits, he stood the very statue of amazement! For near a minute did he remain speechless and immoveable, when, gasping for breath, he exclaimed—“My God of Heaven! can it be?”

The stranger, with one arm, pressed his lifeless burthen closer to his bosom, and, extending his other hand to the Colonel, he said (with that intelligent fascinating smile, which, *had* Colonel Fairfield entertained a doubt, would at once have convinced him that it was indeed Major Berresford!)—“Is it possible, Fairfield, that you did not know me?”

“Know you!” repeated the Colonel, still gazing on him, with an astonishment he could not recover, and tottering forward; “know you! Oh, Berresford, I dare not yet believe my senses!” As he spoke,

spoke, he fell upon his knees, and throwing his arms around Berresford and his unconscious child, he burst into tears!

In vain did Major Berresford implore the Colonel to recollect the state of his Lavinia—in vain did he beseech him, in the most pathetic language, to procure for her the assistance her situation required—for a few minutes Colonel Fairfield was entirely overcome, and the violence of his feelings was absolutely uncontrollable.

CHAP. XVII.

Death's iron slumbers chas'd, the expectant tomb,
Rest of its prey, and o'er the clay-cold cheek,
Life's refluent lustre shooting, theme for less
Than scraph's harp too high, with trembling hand
The bard essays !

WRANGHAM.

THE sailor who had accompanied Major Berresford stood staring, in stupid amazement, at the scene before him, when the Major aroused him, by desiring (in French) that he would fly for some water, to a cottage which rose about half way up the Chine.

The man instantly obeyed ; and by the
time

time he returned, Colonel Fairfield had sufficiently recovered his surprise, to be enabled to exert himself. Scarcely had the water been sprinkled on Lavinia's face, when she opened her eyes—they met those of her lover, fixed upon her in unutterable emotion—her features dilated into a seraphic smile, and throwing her arms around him, she pressed him close, close to her heart, and again closed her eyes.

It was in vain Colonel Fairfield attempted to subdue his sensations—he shed tears like a child, so completely was he overcome by the exquisite delight he experienced, at the thought of the felicity awaiting his heart's joy—his idolized Lavinia!

Major Berresford succeeded in retaining an appearance of composure, until he met the soul-subduing glance from the eyes of his Lavinia—until he felt the fervent pressure of that being, whose slightest touch made his whole frame thrill with extacy! It was then, and not till then,

that the big tears burst from his eyes, and in quick succession coursed each other down his manly cheek. Lavinia did not again betray any signs of consciousness, till the tender voice of her father entreated her to wake to perfect bliss; the same extatic expression continued to mark her countenance; but when she again opened her eyes, they met the features of her father, when, suddenly, her whole contour underwent a complete revolution, and the anguish of disappointment succeeded the most exquisite delight. She raised herself from Berresford's arms, and gazing on her father, she exclaimed, with a groan of agony—"Oh, am I still here? I thought my soul had escaped its miserable mansion! Oh, my father, I thought I was in Heaven! I saw my Edward! I saw his sweet smile—I felt him press me to his heart! Oh, torture! it was but a dream!"

Berresford could no longer restrain his emotion, and clasping her with transport to his heart, he cried—"No, no! it was
not

not a dream ! My soul's dear idol, it was not a dream ! I am here—your own Edward ! I am here—never, never shall we again be separated !”

Lavinia withdrew from his close embrace, eager to convince herself, by ocular demonstration, that she was not deceived. She fixed her eyes upon his face intently, for near a minute, then, with wildness, she cast a half glance at her father, to assure herself that it was indeed reality, when again turning to Berresford, she suddenly threw her arms around his neck, and bursting into tears, ejaculated—“ It is ! it is my Edward !”

Oh what was then

His burst of joy, as to his bounding heart

He caught, he clasp'd her close !

WRANGHAM.

CHAP. XVIII.

Lo, I am here to answer to your vows,
And be the meeting fortunate! I come
With joyful tidings—we shall part no more!
Hark! how the gentle Echo, from her cell,
Talks thro' the cliffs, and marm'ring o'er the stream;
Repeats the accents—"We shall part no more!"
Oh my delightful friends! well pleas'd on high
The Father has beheld you, while the might
Of that stern foe, with bitter trial, prov'd
Your equal deings.

AKENSIDE.

HALF an hour elapsed before either of the
trio could sufficiently recover themselves
to be collected, when the Colonel pro-
posed returning home as soon as possible ;
he

he was apprehensive that Lavinia would be unable to support herself, so great was the agitation she still endured; but she insisted upon endeavouring to reach their abode, which she at length accomplished, supported by her father and Berresford.

When within a few paces of the house, they were perceived by William; he did not remark the person by whom she was assisted; but imagining, from the languid manner in which she moved, that she had been suddenly taken ill, he summoned Mary, and they both hastened out to offer their services; but of this they were rendered wholly incapable, the moment that they observed the features of Major Berresford! Mary screamed, and ran back to the house as fast as her legs could carry her, and William stood staring in silent astonishment.

Berresford's attention was so entirely engrossed in watching Lavinia, that he did not perceive all this; but the Colonel said to his panic-struck domestic, "Aye, Wil-

liam, I wonder not at your amazement—it is Major Berresford, in good truth !”

“ Oh Lord, Sir !” cried William, coming close up to Berresford, “ how glad I am to see you—and alive too !—never, never in this world did I expect such a thing again ! Oh, how happy we shall all be now !” continued he, casting a glance at Lavinia.

“ Indeed, William,” replied the Major, “ no one at this moment is more happy than myself.”

Lavinia was reclined upon a sofa in the little parlour, still supported by the arm of Berresford, whose hand she kept fast locked in her own, while she continued silently to shed tears. The Colonel sat gazing upon them, while each of the three were too completely overwhelmed, by the conviction of their newly-restored felicity, to be able to converse, or require any explanation of the cause which had produced it. Time alone could restore the original harmony of Lavinia’s feelings ; she could scarcely,

scarcely, as yet, believe the evidence of her senses! If, for one moment, she withdrew her eyes from Berresford's face, she fancied he could not be there, when she would cast a glance upon him, with a kind of fearful apprehension, dreading lest he should have disappeared. Her countenance did *not* denote perfect joy—there still remained upon it an expression of uncertainty, a timid dread of the exquisiteness of the present scene being merely ideal—she could not immediately feel the whole strength of her happiness—it is not in the first hour that we meet the object dearest to our soul, that we experience the greatest delight, but when we have regained a sufficient degree of composure, to enable us to reflect upon the extent of our felicity, and to converse coherently and rationally with the being we dote upon—then is rapture felt in its full force—then do we, with the most animated eagerness, recur to scenes which both alike have cherished the

the remembrance of! Then is mutually described the pains, hopes, fear, and various anxieties endured while absent; and the impatient anticipation of the exquisite period of reunion, which at that moment is experienced to the utmost extent of its influence.

Still were the trio sitting, as if spell-bound by the enchantment of an Heavenly vision, when the parlour door was burst open, and Fanny, followed by Colebrook, flew in, exclaiming, "Is it true? is it true?" The moment she beheld Berresford, she sprang towards him, and clasped him to her heart, with the genuine affection of a sister—her tears burst forth, and in a suffocated voice she cried, "Oh, my Lavinia, my Lavinia will be happy!"

Not less was the joy of Colebrook, though his demonstration of it was not quite so enthusiastic.

Mary (who had, with some difficulty, been persuaded that it was indeed Major Berresford, and not his ghost) had perceived

ceived Fanny and Colebrook crossing a field which led to the house, and, eager to be the first to communicate the glad tidings, had flown to meet them; but her vehemence of expression defeated its purpose, and it was some time before she could render herself intelligible; and indeed, what she had to tell was of so surprising a nature, it was no wonder her auditors could not immediately comprehend the whole extent of it.

Colebrook was the first who had sufficient recollection to start the expediency of instantly sending off expresses to Major Berresford's friends. Berresford declared he was incapable of addressing them by letter at that moment, and entreated Colebrook would write an account of his safety to his elder brother, who would break it to his father and mother; and also to beg he would immediately forward an express to Lady Maria Courtney, to the same effect. This request was complied

plied with without delay, and the letter was dispatched as soon as finished.

It may perhaps be subject of comment to the reader, why Colonel Fairfield did not recognize Major Berresford, on first beholding him; yet, surely, it was not surprising, for, had the Colonel ever doubted the account of his death, he would not have known him in the dress he then wore. His hair, which was remarkable, from its curling in natural ringlets all over his head, was entirely concealed by the red worsted night-cap; had his head been uncovered, there is not a doubt that the Colonel would have been certain it was him, notwithstanding he imagined him dead; of this there was a convincing proof, for when he beheld him supporting Lavinia (he had thrown off his cap, being aware that it was that which disguised him), the Colonel instantly recognized him.

The moment that Lavinia had cast her eyes

eyes upon the figure of Berresford, as he stepped on shore, she was struck by the resemblance it bore to her lover, and she gazed upon it with feelings indescribable. It may be remembered, that she did not speak after the boat had landed ; she was indeed incapable of utterance, every movement she beheld, his walk, his air, the turn of his head, so completely represented that being, whose image was ever present to her mind, that, spite of probability, nay, almost *possibility*, she felt that it was him ! She was unable to stir one step from where she stood, or take any measures to ascertain the truth, when the bounding figure flew towards her, and brought conviction with it !

When she first recovered her senses, and beheld the beaming features of her lover, she imagined that she had died, and was then reunited to him in Heaven ! This persuasion lasted until she again opened her eyes, and met her father's countenance

nance; the emotion she then experienced has already been described.

Shortly after the dinner was removed (which was almost untouched) from before the overjoyed party assembled at the cottage at Shanklin, Lavinia, exhausted with the tumultuous emotions she had endured, reclined her head upon Berresford's shoulder, and insensibly dropped asleep: she remained but a few minutes unconscious, but even this short oblivion greatly refreshed her fatigued mind; but as the conviction of the truth gradually presented itself, and she at length felt thoroughly convinced of the felicity she was awaking to—then, then was the moment of rapture! then was experienced an extacy, which could repay whole ages of pain!

One of those rare and brilliant hours,
Which, like the aloes' lingering flowers,
May blossom to the eye of man
But once, in all his weary span!

THOMAS MOORE.

As

As the evening advanced, composure gradually returned to this happy assemblage, and his delighted friends became anxious to receive a circumstantial detail of every thing which had befallen Major Berresford since the period when they had imagined he had been lost to them for ever.

CHAP. XIX.

Cantero l'arani, cantero gli affranni
Damor, che un cavalier sottenne gravi,
Peregrinando in terra in mar molt'anni!

ARIOSTO.

I sing of love, and sing the pains of love,
And all the toils a suffering hero bore,
Long destin'd far o'er land and sea to rove!

To the eager request, that he would relate his adventures, Major Berresford replied in the following terms:—"Simmons told you," looking at Colonel Fairfield; "I think you said Simmons told you every particular respecting our voyage, and its inauspicious termination. Poor fellow! he

He did indeed see me *sink*, for *which*, as well as the *phenomenon* of my rising again, I must account, which I shall do very simply. My debilitated strength was almost exhausted by the efforts I made to regain the child, which a strong tide, running in shore, bore rapidly away. When I had once secured it, the exertion I was obliged to make to reach the boat, was of course much greater, as I was then swimming against the tide; however, I was so happy as to succeed in depositing in safety my helpless burthen; and I should the next moment have been in the boat myself, had it not been for the over zeal of some one of the crew, who, imagining I was in danger, precipitately threw a rope out to assist me, which struck me with great violence on the temple, and, for a few moments, rendered me wholly insensible, so completely was I stunned by the force of the blow. This doubtless precipitated me so far beneath the water, as to make me invisible, and it must have
been

been at that moment that Simmons imagined I had sunk. When I regained my recollection (which I am confident did not desert me for more than a minute), I found myself floating on the surface of the water, which was bearing me with velocity towards the shore. I could perceive the boat at no great distance, but it was too dark for me to be distinguished; I found my strength so thoroughly spent, and my whole frame so completely disordered, from the blow I had received, and the quantity of water that I had swallowed, that to attempt to struggle against the tide, in order to reach the boat, I felt would be inevitable destruction. The utmost I could do, was to support myself from sinking, and suffer the current to carry me where it would. I endeavoured to cry out, but I felt such an oppression on my chest, that I could only utter a feeble cry, which I was certain could not be heard by those in the boat. It was then, for the first time, I began really
to

to imagine myself in danger—I never shall forget the sensation that I experienced at that moment. It was not the fear of death—that could not dismay me! but, oh! I thought——” he was about to have said—of what *Lavinia* would have suffered but he hesitated, and then added, “ of what you *all* would feel, when you heard of my fate !”

“ Oh, for God’s sake !” interrupted the Colonel, observing *Lavinia* greatly affected, and *Fanny*’s tears fast flowing, “ for God’s sake, my dear Berresford, do not recall to our minds the anguish of that period! let it be for ever buried in oblivion, or only recollected at some future time, when we feel inclined to murmur at some lesser evil, when the bare remembrance of that will reconcile us to every inferior ill.”

Berresford pressed *Lavinia*’s hand with ardour to his lips, and continued—“ I was at length thrown on *Gallia*’s hostile shore, and for many minutes after I was wholly unconscious. The first thing that aroused

me was a kick, which I received from a French soldier, who was standing sentry near the spot, and who, with the *humanity* characteristic of the master he served, took that mode of ascertaining whether I was dead or alive. I opened my eyes, and the fellow roared out, '*Comment! n'est pas mort?*' I could not speak, but my fist mechanically clinched, while I felt the strongest inclination (though wholly without the power) to knock him down. '*Leve toi,*' he continued, '*je voir bien tu est Anglois.*' I took no notice of him, but, half raising myself, I discharged a quantity of salt water from my mouth, eyes, and ears, which streamed for some time, when I felt myself greatly recovered. I perceived a party of soldiers coming to relieve the sentry; the corporal came up to me, and asked me if I was an Englishman, and how I came there? To his first interrogatory I answered in the affirmative; and added, that his comrade could inform him how I came there, as I fancied he must have

have seen me cast on shore. The corporal replied, 'that if I was an Englishman, I was at all events his prisoner, and must therefore follow him immediately.' It was useless to object, and I attempted to rise, but was unable to stand without assistance, my head turning giddy the moment I stood up. One of the men observed me stagger, and offered to support me. I felt grateful for a courtesy I so little expected, from the brutal manner in which I had before been addressed, and accepted his assistance. I proceeded about a quarter of a mile, in a slow and uneven pace, which seemed very irksome to the corporal, whose patience was quite worn out, and he said (to the soldier on whose arm I leant), that as I was so weak, there was no danger in leaving me with him alone, who he ordered to conduct me to the prison.

"As soon as the party was out of sight, my companion began to talk with great volubility, protesting *qu'il etoit beaucoup*

chagriner de me voir tant incommodé, but declared we had not much farther to go, before we should reach the town, which, upon enquiry, I found to be B——, a small place on the coast of Normandy. As we proceeded, my complaisant conductor told me, that he had himself been a prisoner in England, and that he had ever since retained the strongest affection for the English, who were *des vrai brave gens*.

“I was very cautious at first how I answered my voluble supporter, being aware of how very little sincerity there in general is in the enthusiastic terms in which his countrymen express themselves; and all he could have said would not have prejudiced me half so much in his favour, as did a sight of his ingenuous countenance, which the encreasing daylight now rendered visible. We at length reached the town, which struck me as the most miserable place I had ever seen—but, in the state of mind I was in, I should have thought the most magnificent city a dreary wilder-

wilderness. My spirits sunk still lower, on beholding the gloomy pile in which I was to be confined. As we entered, my kind companion told me he should often see me, as he was frequently sentinel over the prisoners of war. I enquired if there were many ; he answered, ' No, very few ; and those only common sailors.' Owing to this I was allowed a room to myself, and the range of the building, which was surrounded on three sides by a court, within a high wall ; the back looked on the sea, which, when the tide was in, washed its base. There was only one sentinel within the court ; the others kept guard on the outside. I enquired if I should be allowed implements for writing, but, as I fully expected, they told me they were not permitted to any Englishman. This completed my sum of misery ; I was certain all my friends would be persuaded of my death, and suffer accordingly. This idea preyed upon my mind, and added so considerably to my indisposition, that for

near a fortnight, I never rose for more than a few minutes from my wretched mattress. All this time I had no other sustenance than the prison allowance, which, had I been in health, would not have half satisfied me. I had no one valuable which could turn to account, but my watch, which had fortunately preserved its situation while I was in the water; and this I wished to keep, thinking it would be an excellent bribe to offer some one who might be able to assist me in escaping. I had not undressed myself on the night of the accident, apprehending, from what I had observed, that some mischief was very likely to ensue, so that I was cast on shore completely equipped. The preservation of my watch I doubtless owe to my having accidentally broke the chain the very day before; I had tucked it in altogether, so that it did not appear; had it been otherwise, the very *worthy gentlemen* into whose hands I fell, would probably have possessed themselves of it.

“ The

"The bare idea of the possibility of escape gave me new life, and I struggled to recover strength, that I might go down into the court to reconnoitre. I descended several times, without being able to discover any means of furthering my scheme, when, one day, I perceived my old friend, the soldier who had been so kind to me, standing sentry within the court. I immediately accosted him, and he seemed equally glad to see me, but protested he was shocked at my looking so ill. There was no one near us at the moment; and without my leading at all to the subject, he declared, in all the energy of his native language, that he wondered not that I should be miserable at being torn from such a country as mine, that he had never been happy since he had left, and that he would rather be a prisoner all his life under a *real* king, than serve a tyrant, who had no more *right* to rule than he himself had. I admired the sentiment conveyed in these

words, and felt a species of congeniality towards the person who had uttered them. He had given me a fair opportunity, and I asked him if he would like to revisit England? Without allowing me to finish the word, he vociferated, '*C'est cela qui je veut ! j'auroit etoit en Angleterre long temps passer mais ;*' and he shook his head, '*l'argent.*' He sighed heavily ; I drew still closer to him, and said, 'I will give you money to carry you to England, if you will contrive an opportunity for me to escape with you.'—'*Oh oui, oui, c'est possible ! c'est possible !*' he exclaimed, while his whole countenance brightened ; '*Je peut faire tout cela ! mais il faut de l'argent.*' This I knew very well ; but I did not wish to trust him with my watch, before I was acquainted with the plan he meant to pursue. I therefore told him, that if he would inform me how my escape were practicable, I would reward him to the utmost of my power ; and that, if ever I reached my native land (if he liked it) always

always retain him in my service. The poor fellow was quite overcome, and protested, that it was not reward that he required, but merely the means for procuring what was necessary for our escape. The genuine sensibility he betrayed completely dissipated all my doubts of his probity, and we consulted on the measures to be pursued. If I could once succeed in gaining the outside of the prison, there appeared very little difficulty to be surmounted, as La Touche told me there were numbers of fishing-boats constantly lying on the shore, one of which we might seize during the night, and escape, with very little danger of being interrupted. He could procure a basket of provisions to take with us, sufficient for the voyage, which I thought we could succeed in performing in three days, if the weather was not entirely unfavourable. I felt some scruples of conscience, at the idea of seizing what belonged to another, and perhaps reducing some poor fisherman, and his whole family, to misery, by de-

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priving

priving them of the means of gaining their livelihood. I mentioned this to La Touche ; he was silent for a moment, and then, with animation, he told me, that the officers of his regiment had a boat, which they kept for the purpose of pleasure, and that it lay in a creek about half a mile from the town, from whence we might take it without the smallest risk, when favoured by darkness. To this I made not the smallest objection ; and it only remained to determine how I was to penetrate the walls of my prison.

“ The apartment I occupied was on the second floor ; the window looked towards the sea, but it was barred with iron ; I had often tried to shake them, but they were immovable ; but with a strong file, I thought it possible I might succeed in removing one of them, when a sufficient space would be made to permit my body to pass, and, with the help of a rope, I could easily let myself down. I informed La Touche of the subject of my deliberations, when he declared he could very
plau-

plausibly make an excuse for visiting the prison, as soon as he was off duty, as he was very good friends with the keeper, and he would bring with him (concealed) an instrument, such as I described, and a rope. I furnished him myself with an excuse for visiting me, by commissioning him to purchase me a change of linen, which I was most woefully in want of, having been obliged to go *sans chemise*, while I washed the *only* one I was possessed of. Having ascertained to a certainty that we were not observed, I gave him my watch, which I desired him to dispose of for our mutual benefit. I then quitted him, fearful lest our conference might be observed, and give room for suspicion.

“The next day he made his appearance in my apartment, and having secured the door, he took off his coat, and untwisted from around his body the cord which was to give me liberty; he then drew forth a strong iron file; and nothing remained but to fix upon the period when my escape

was to be attempted. It was necessary that I should perform my work during the night, for fear of observation; and I was uncertain how long it would take me, as the bar was tolerably thick. I therefore appointed the third night for the execution of our plan, when La Touche promised to be under the window to receive me. We calculated that the tide would be out at the hour we fixed upon (which was midnight), so that I ran no risk of another aquatic excursion, in my descent from the prison window. I indulged myself in the most lively anticipations, while pursuing my endeavours to penetrate the stubborn bar; I fancied a thousand different ways in which I should surprise you, and pictured, over and over, the situations in which I should find you. Then again I dreaded the effect which might have been produced, by a belief of my having perished; and my eagerness to relieve my apprehensions gave strength to my arm. I could have finished my work long before
the

the appointed time, but I left the completion of it to the last night, fearing lest the keeper might pay me a visit. This proved a very necessary precaution, for he entered my room the next morning, with an air of greater respect than he usually wore; he brought me a message from the *sub-prefect*, purporting that I was permitted, on my parole of honour, to quit my prison, with a restriction of not proceeding more than three miles off B——; or, if I preferred being removed to Cherbourg, which was only twelve miles distant, he would take measures for my removal to that place. There were few things at this moment which could have distressed me more, than the *sub-prefect's* civility, and I hesitated what answer to send him, or how to avoid accepting the offer of liberty on my parole, which I was resolved to refuse, as it must have put an end to every attempt at an escape. After a little deliberation, I sent him word, that I was too much indisposed to feel any desire

sire to avail myself of his offer of enlargement; and that the very reduced state of my finances made the situation I then occupied the most convenient. In the evening the keeper again repaired to my apartment, and told me that he had delivered my message to the *sub-prefect*, who would wait upon me himself the ensuing day, in order to ascertain my situation. I blest Heaven that this night had been fixed upon for my departure. At eleven o'clock, with feelings I cannot describe, I took the bar from my window, and found a cavity more than large enough to permit me to pass. The church clock had not finished striking the hour of twelve, when, seizing the rope, which I had fastened to a secure bar, I was the next minute safe upon the strand beneath. La Touche was waiting for me, bearing on his arm a large basket of provisions. He had procured himself a sailor's dress, and a night-cap for me, which, as I had no hat, I found very acceptable. A quarter of an hour brought us to the boat,

boat, which we immediately entered, and unmoored.—Oh, with what eagerness did I pull the oar, which drew me nearer to my native land! to all my soul most valued! In the boat I found the great-coat I wore when you first saw me, which had probably been left there by some French officer. It was very useful to me, for, when we got out to sea, we set the sails, and having relinquished the oar, I felt extremely chilly.

“La Touche knew very little about managing the boat, the charge of which I took entirely on myself. I was sensible that this dear little island was the nearest land we could make; and after three days and nights (there being very little wind), we succeeded in reaching it.—But had I known who waited for me on the shore—oh, Fairfield! what I felt when I heard your voice!—but that was little, compared to the sensation which followed, when I beheld——” Major Berresford could add no more, but, with uncontrol-

able fondness, he clasped Lavinia to his heart!

CHAP. XX.

He ceas'd; but left so pleasing on their ear
His voice, that, listening, still they seem'd to hear.

POPE.

No formal expression of ceremonious congratulations broke from the lips of his attentive auditors, when Major Berresford had ceased to speak; but the tearful eye, and look of sympathy, denoted, plainer than any language, the deep interest they felt in all concerning him. After a pause, the Colonel said—"Then it was La Touche who accompanied you? poor fellow! I long to express my gratitude to him—I
ordered

ordered the servants to take care of him; but I must have some conversation with him myself to-morrow."

"I never saw a being so delighted in my life, as he was during our little voyage," returned Berresford; "he chattered incessantly; I could not get him to be silent; I really was heartily glad when he fell asleep, for he interrupted my cogitations without the smallest compunction. I more than once expressed my astonishment, at his choosing to quit for ever his native land, and that without betraying the slightest regret. He speedily accounted for his apparent insensibility, by informing me, in the most enthusiastic terms, that while he was a prisoner at Norman Cross, he formed an intimacy with a young woman, who was servant to the jailor; he did all in his power to induce her to marry him, but she would not quit her mother, who lived in the neighbourhood; and on an exchange of prisoners taking place, he was unavoidably torn from her: he says he

he has never ceased thinking of her, and cannot be happy without her. He flatters himself she has continued constant to him, and purposes setting out for Stilton very shortly. Whether he marries or not, I shall retain him in my service, which he professes to be the ultimatum of his wishes."

At an early hour Colonel Fairfield proposed retiring (certain that Berresford must be greatly in want of sleep, and that Lavinia would be much more composed after a night's rest); but it was late before he could induce them to take his advice. The sisters retired together.—Scarcely was Fanny's head reposed upon the pillow, when (having affectionately embraced her sister, and expressed her delight at the change in her fate) she dropt asleep. But in vain did Lavinia endeavour to compose her ideas—every event of the day revolved successively in her mind; every word and look of Berresford's was recalled; and it was out of her
power

power to banish the enchanting retrospect. For some hours she continued to pursue this train of thoughts, when her wearied intellects gained a temporary relief in a few moments of forgetfulness; but it was that watchful unrefreshing slumber, which is always generated by an agitated mind, and she awoke almost immediately with a violent start, and a sensation as if she *ought* not to have fallen asleep. She raised her head from the pillow, and listened, she knew not for what; and her senses confused by the fumes of sleep, and the phantastic visions which so frequently affect the mind on first awaking, she began to doubt whether all the events of the preceding day were not a delirium of her own imagination. She precipitately quitted her bed, and throwing her dressing-gown about her, she paced the apartment several times, hoping to dissipate the confusion of her thoughts. She succeeded, in a great degree; and finding herself greatly oppressed with the heat, she seated herself at the little
case-

casement window, and continued there until Fanny awoke, and perceiving her, she entreated she would return to her bed, and endeavour to gain some repose—“Consider, my dear Lavinia,” said Fanny, “you will never be able to go through the day, if you do not get some sleep—and then you will be ill; and Berresford miserable, and all of us wretched again!”

Lavinia complied, and at length succeeded in obtaining a few hours sound repose.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXI.

Oh ! who that has ever had rapture complete,
Would ask how we feel it, or why it is sweet ;
How rays are confus'd, or how particles fly,
Through the medium refin'd, of a glance or a sigh ?
Is there one, who but once would not rather have known it,
Than written, with Harvey, whole volumes upon it ?

THOMAS MOORE.

THE next day all was joy, delight, unalloyed felicity ! and every individual of the party were joined in the wish to return to Fairfield as soon as possible, the present situation being extremely inconvenient ; and it was agreed that they should all quit Shanklin the next day, and that William should be dispatched immediately, to prepare the servants to expect them, and also
to

to acquaint Sir Francis Colebrook with the joyful event that had taken place.

Berresford declared that he was now perfectly recovered, and had never been better in his life ; but to this his friends did not give implicit credit. His person had been greatly reduced by his illness ; but his looks (excepting a little hollow in the cheek) did not discover any appearance of recent indisposition ; for so great were his spirits, and so animated the expression of his features, with the glow of happiness which overspread them, that no one would have taken him for an invalid.

It was near ten o'clock at night, when the party (who were still sitting on the green before the door) were surprised by the sight of a carriage, with four horses, which stopped before the house. One of the post-boys alighted, and was approaching the door, but was prevented knocking, by Colonel Fairfield's asking him who he wished to enquire for? The man put his hand to his hat, and replied—"The gentleman

man in that there chaise, Sir, bid me *ax* for Major *Bresford*."

Berresford was standing close by, and exclaiming—"Good God, it's my father!" he flew towards the carriage—a hand was put out at the window, which vainly endeavoured to open the door; this Berresford instantly effected—and the next moment his father was in his arms!—he only quitted him to clasp to his heart his mother, whom he bore into the house, wholly overcome by her emotion. She was followed by his eldest brother, who impatiently awaited to embrace him.

I will not attempt to particularize each circumstance of this happy meeting, which doubtless would have been interpreted into a very different scene, by any observer who had been ignorant of the truth, so great was the emotion displayed by these affectionate relatives, who had mourned as dead the being they most loved, and were now united to.

The very moment that the Honourable
Mr.

Mr. Berresford had read the letter which restored his peace, and, in some degree, recovered the first violence of his emotions, he ordered his carriage, and while it was getting ready, informed his wife that their Edward still lived, and he was resolved never to rest until his eyes once more beheld him. The tender mother, and overjoyed brother, were no less anxious than himself to participate in this happiness; and they all three set out in their post-chariot, with four horses. It was about four o'clock in the morning when the express reached young Mr. Berresford; he had immediately ordered another to be forwarded to Lady Maria Courtney; and, as he had not time to write, he sent her the letter he had just received from Mr. Colebrook, enclosed in a blank sheet. By five o'clock, himself, his father and mother, were seated in the carriage.

The sisters were strangers to the persons of Major Berresford's family, but the moment they beheld them, they felt a congeniality

geniality to them; and nothing could be more gratifying, than the affectionate manner in which they particularized Lavinia. Colonel Fairfield and Mr. Berresford met as old friends, and all was joy and unanimity. The Colonel, with some difficulty, succeeded in getting beds in the neighbourhood, by which means the cottage accommodated the rest of the party.

At an early hour the next morning, the breakfast-table was surrounded. Colonel Fairfield had, the preceding night, mentioned his intention of returning to Fairfield, and warmly solicited Mr. Berresford and his family to accompany them. Mr. Berresford accepted the invitation with pleasure, and slightly hinted, that he hoped to see his Edward's happiness completed before he quitted him.

About ten o'clock the whole party left Shanklin. Colonel Fairfield's landau (which he had brought over with him) conveyed Mrs. Berresford, the Major, Lavinia, Fanny, and Colebrook; the two

female servants rode on the dickey; they were drawn by four hack horses; and Colonel Fairfield, Mr. Berresford, and his eldest son, followed in the post-chariot. La Touche had, the night before, set out for Stilton, loaded with tokens of gratitude from every individual of the delighted party.—Major Berresford promised he would let him know where he was to join him.

It would be vain to attempt to picture the sensations of Berresford and Lavinia, or again beholding the woods of Fairfield—at approaching an edifice which recalled such a variety of emotions. When Lavinia entered the house, and encountered the sight of objects, which she had so lately looked on while under the influence of such opposite feelings—when she received the affectionate congratulations of the Colebrooks, who were waiting to receive them, and read, in the happy faces of the domestics, how truly they participated in her felicity, she felt *almost*

overcome; but when she caught sight of Fido (who the Colebrooks had brought with them), and beheld him capering, in a perfect extacy round his master, totally disregarding every one else, she was wholly subdued; and, flying to her chamber, she was obliged, for a short time, to absent herself from the happy circle below.

The evening past in an harmony of pleasure, which beggars all description. Music was proposed, but neither Berresford nor Lavinia seconded the proposition, being aware that their feelings were as yet too tenderly susceptible, to support the vibration of notes, which would strike the tenderest chords of sensibility, and awaken all the softest emotions:—

There is in souls a sympathy with sounds,
And as the mind is pitch'd, the ear is pleas'd
With melting airs, or martial, brisk, or grave:
Some chord, in unison with what we feel,
Is touch'd within us, and the heart replies.

COWPER.

Soon after breakfast the next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Williams appeared at Fairfield; they had only been prevented from coming the preceding day, by the apprehension, that so many congratulatory voices might prove oppressive.

Berresford had written to Lady Maria Courtney from Shanklin, informing her of the project of returning to Fairfield; but her Ladyship had never received the letter, as she had quitted North Wales before it had arrived; and she would, without doubt, have repaired to Shanklin, had she not heard, by accident, from the master of the hotel at Southampton, that Colonel Fairfield, and a large party, were then at Fairfield Lodge, and she reached that place about eight o'clock in the evening. At the time she arrived, Berresford and Lavinia were absent, strolling through the hanging woods which led to the seat where they had first confessed a mutual passion. Lady Maria, with undisguised impatience, went through the ceremonies o
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the meeting, and introduction to those she had not before seen, and then eagerly demanded, "Where was Edward?"

On being informed that he was walking with Lavinia, she said she would go and meet them; but, upon reflection, she forbore, in her present fatigued and agitated state, to encrease her perturbation by this exertion. Simmons, who had accompanied her, was still standing with the door in his hand, while his countenance expressed the most eager impatience; unable longer to controul himself, he cried—"Please your Ladyship, I know the road, and will go and tell him." Without waiting to know her pleasure, he darted off.

Berresford and Lavinia were slowly returning, when they perceived a man, which the twilight prevented their recognizing, running towards them with frightful velocity. Lavinia felt alarmed, but had not time to express her apprehension, before Simmons threw himself with violence on his knees before them, and, with his hands

raised to Heaven, and streaming eyes, fixed on his master's face, remained totally incapable of giving utterance to his feelings. Berresford endeavoured to raise him, at the same time exclaiming—"Simmons! is it possible? is Lady Maria arrived?"

Simmons made no answer, but continued to gaze upon him while he spoke, watching each word, as if it brought conviction to his mind, that it was indeed his master that he heard, yet too much absorbed in the contemplation to understand the purport of what he said—"Poor fellow! he is quite overcome," said Berresford. "Simmons, my faithful Simmons!" continued he, shaking his hand, "you do not say you are glad to see me."

The good creature clasped his knees, and sobbed aloud. Lavinia shed tears at witnessing the feelings she could so thoroughly understand.

It was some time before Berresford could prevail upon his servant to rise; when, at last, he did, he covered his face with his hands.

hands, and sobbed out—" Oh, I am so glad to see you !—I cannot tell how glad I am to see you !"

It was near a quarter of an hour before Simmons was sufficiently composed to relate the errand on which he was sent ; during all this time, poor Lady Maria was in a perfect agony of impatience.—I will leave the reader, who has so often beheld delineated in the foregoing pages, the doting fondness which Lady Maria felt for Edward Berresford, to imagine the scene which followed their reunion.

CHAPER THE LAST.

Weeping for joy, the sire their union hail'd ;

With hands to Heaven uprais'd, his children blest !

GISBORNE.

On the day week on which Lady Maria Courtney arrived at Fairfield Lodge, Major Berresford received the hand of his Lavinia, and Colebrook that of Fanny, at the village church. The ceremony was performed by Mr. Williams; and all the friends of the respective parties were present.

On the day previous to his marriage, Lady Maria had made over to her nephew Edward (by deed of gift) the half of her possessions, in which was included the beautiful estate in North Wales, for which
place

place Berresford and his beloved, followed by Simmons and Mary, set out immediately after the ceremony. Lady Maria and Colonel Fairfield were to follow them in a month. Colebrook, and his animated bride, accompanied by his sister, commenced a tour through the western counties, which was to be extended, by a circuitous route, to Wales, where it was their intention to remain some time with Major and Mrs. Berresford. Colonel Fairfield was detained for two days, while he regaled and entertained the poor people of his neighbourhood.

It was the intention of Sir Francis Colebrook to give a most splendid fete to all ranks, when his son and daughters returned to Hampshire, as he wished them to be present to partake of it; in the mean time, he distributed large sums, to be expended for the relief of the poor. The Berresford family, accompanied by Lady Maria, also left Fairfield on the wedding-day, for their estate in Surry, where Colonel Fairfield

field promised to join them, after he had paid some visits among friends whom he had not seen for many years, and whom he took this opportunity of revisiting.

About the middle of September, Colonel Fairfield, Lady Maria Courtney, Mr. Mrs. and Miss Colebrook, arrived at Plas Nefawl (Major Berresford's estate in North Wales), and were received by him and his adored Lavinia with the warmest affection.

Some time previous to this, La Touche had rejoined his master, accompanied by a little rosy-cheeked dumplin-faced damsel, who had consented to reward his constancy.

The knowledge of Major Berresford being still in existence having reached the ears of the Commander in Chief, he immediately presented him with a lieutenant-colonelcy, as a token of his high opinion of him as an officer, and also to compensate to him for the loss of his majority. Berresford greatly rejoiced that his favourite friend had been promoted. He was most
anxious

anxious to acquaint that friend of his safety ; this was a happiness he hoped soon to enjoy, as the regiment had suffered so considerably in Egypt, as to make it advisable they should come home, and they were now actually on their passage. With the commission which made him a lieutenant-colonel, Berresford received an unlimited leave of absence ; but this proved wholly superfluous, as, upon the signing of preliminaries of peace, which took place the October following, Colonel Berresford (most happy in the opportunity it gave him of enjoying, uninterruptedly, the society of his Lavinia) exchanged upon half-pay, and reposed for awhile upon his hard-earned laurels.

THE CONCLUSION.

Adieu, ye lays, that Fancy's flowers adorn,

The soft amusement of the vacant mind.

BEATTIE.

WITH regret I relinquish the pleasing task,
 of delineating the emotions of the vir-
 tuous and enlightened mind! I grieve to
 quit the society of ideal beings—few are
 the congenial spirits we meet with in real
 life; and it was in the total absence of all
 according minds (save in my own family)
 I first introduced myself to the amiable
 circle I have just taken leave of, and which,
 I am confident, I never should have cre-
 ated in my own imagination, had I at that
 period been in a society calculated to give
 a zest to existence; but while I was deprived
 of that chief source of earthly bliss, the in-
 tercourse of souls in unison, I first projec-
 ted this method of supplying to myself (in
 some

some measure) the absence of real enjoyment. How frequently, when fatigued by the monstrous stupidity of common-place bodies, have I flown to my favourite pursuit, and in company with Lavinia and Major Berresford, forgot every thing else!

It was merely for the amusement of my leisure hours, that I commenced this undertaking, and, as *such*, I have ever pursued it, nor suffered it to interfere with more important concerns—never was any thing projected, that more completely answered the end it was designed for!—how many uneasy sensations has it been the means of dissipating!—how many vain regrets has it subdued!—and how often has my mind, when agitated by recent pleasure, or actual restlessness, insensibly regained its accustomed tone, while endeavouring to pourtray the perfection of nature!—Dared I hope that *such* would be the beneficial effect of it upon the minds of those who peruse it, how infinitely

nitely would my satisfaction be encreased ! Yet should it fail to make the wished-for impression on the heart of the reader, I have still left to console me, the pleasing certainty, that every moral and religious sentiment must be encreased by a perusal of the preceding pages, and that no word or expression is here inserted, which could give offence to the most chaste and delicate understanding.

I take my leave of the reader, without deprecating the censure he may be inclined to cast upon me—I wish not to influence the opinion he has long since formed of me.

If praise I do deserve, in justice grant,
What, if unmerited, I do not want!

The solution of the Enigma (page 66, volume the second) is
Salt.

FINIS.

Lane, Darling, and Co. Leadenhall-Street.

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